The Rightly-Guided Caliph & Great Reviver

'UMAR BIN 'ABD AL-'AZIZ

Indicators of Renewal & Guided Reformation on the Prophetic Path



Dr. Ali Muhammad As-Sallabi

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By Dr ‘Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallābi

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Translator's Foreword

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful and Master of the Day of Judgment. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship save Allah Alone Who has no partner, the Lord of the Universe and the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth. I bear witness that Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is His servant and Messenger, who was sent as a mercy for mankind and a proof for those traversing the path to Allah.

It has been a great pleasure and delight to render the biography of such a righteous and virtuous character as 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz into English, while I recognise that doing it justice is probably almost impossible. Aṣ-Ṣallābi's extensive efforts are certainly commendable given that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made it his life's work to reform his State and revive Islām by administering truth and justice in all aspects of his

personal, religious and political life, which this book proves he did with great success, by the will of Allāh. For this reason alone, it is no exaggeration to say that English readers have long been deprived of the life story of this outstanding Islāmic hero and exemplar. While there are some short and scattered accounts about his general life, this is the first book to deal specifically with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's reforms, which is surprising given that he has been attributed the title of *Mujaddid* (Reformer; Reviver) within Islāmic scholarship, in great detail.

Aṣ-Ṣallābi covers a wide range of content matter: from religious treatise, doctrines and sermons, to political manifestos and edicts, to poems, eulogies and prayers. Since much of the texts he refers to are classical, translating them has required the consultation of specialist sources, such as reference books, classical dictionaries, *Shuyukh* (religious leaders), poets and specialists in classical Islāmic history to ensure correct understanding. Whilst the same cannot be said of many authors, aṣ-Ṣallābī adopts a proper referencing system throughout the book that makes locating the original works for the purposes of background research and cross-referencing so much easier. As a translator, this labour on the part of the author never goes unappreciated!

Translations from the Qur'ān were taken from Dr. Muhammad Taq-ud-Din al-Hillal and Dr. Muhammad Muḥsin Khan's *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble* Qur'ān *in the English Language* (2007), Riyadh: Darussalam. All

authentic *Aḥadith* have been translated according to approved English translations of *Aḥadith Sahihah* where their sources have been provided, while all other *Aḥadith* not attributed to these sources have been sourced elsewhere, whenever possible; otherwise translations are my own.

Islāmic terms have been loosely translated, as literal translation would often result unfavourably and probably incomprehensibly. Some terms have been transliterated, such as *Sunnah* or *Bayt al-Māl;* these appear in italicized format and glosses have been included in the body of the text as well as in a glossary as a means of introducing specific Islāmic terms and concepts to the reader and preserving the Arabic and Islāmic authenticity of the original text. Another reason for keeping some of the terms in transliterated Arabic was that these words often deal with culture-specific or religion-specific concepts that need to be understood with their details intact and with their full meanings, which might have been lost in translation by attempting to offer equivalent terms in English. For example, the *Bayt al-Māl,* literally "The House of Money" and loosely rendered "Public Treasury", served as a royal treasury for the caliphs in the sense of managing finance and government expenditures as a treasury most commonly does, but it also administered distributions of *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) revenues for public works. Because of the added function specific to the role of the treasury in an Islāmic State, I found it more appropriate to use the transliterated

term throughout the book so as to imply this difference. A clear transliteration system has been adopted (see transliteration table) that would facilitate back-transliteration if necessary (such as in the case of proper names).

All good comes from Allah, while all mistakes are from myself. May Allah reward the author for his efforts, Darussalam publishers for their commitment to making such works available and I ask that Allah accepts this translation as a benefit to the *Ummah* and amongst my good deeds on the Day of Judgment – *Amin*.

Safina Naser

M.A. Translation Studies, B.A. (Hons) Arabic Studies, University of Manchester, U.K.

Transliteration Table

giottal stop	'
أ	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	d
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ	h
و	w
ي	y
long vowel a	a

Table of Contents

About the Author

- ❖ Born in the city of Benghāzi, Lībya, in 1963.
- ❖ Obtained a Higher Education Bachelor of Arts Degree at distinction level and at the top of his class from the College of *Da'wah* (Islāmic Preaching) and *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (Tenets of the Religion) from the University of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah in 1992/1993.
- ❖ Graduated with a Master's Degree from the College of *Usūl ad-Dīn* (Tenets of the Religion), department of *Tafsīr* (Exegesis) and *'Ulūm al*-Qur'ān (Sciences of the Qur'ān), Umm Durmān Islāmic University, Sudān, in 1996.
- ❖ Obtained a PhD in Islāmic Studies awarded by Umm Durmān Islāmic University in 1999 with a thesis entitled: *'The Establishment of Jurisprudence in the Holy* Qur'ān*'*.
- ❖ He has published numerous works, including:
  - 'The Creed of Muslims based on the Attributes of the Lord of the Worlds'
  - 'Moderation in the Holy Qur'ān'
  - The series: 'Pages from Islāmic History in North Africa'

- ‘The Umayyad and Abbasid Dynasties and the Emergence of the Kharijites’
- ‘The Rafidite ‘Abidiyyah (Fatimid) State’
- ‘The Jurisprudence of Empowerment in the Murabiṭūn State’
- ‘The Almohad Dynasty’
- ‘The Ottoman Empire: Factors Behind its Rise and Reasons for its Decline’
- ‘The Conqueror of Constantinople: Sultan Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ’
- ‘Shi’ite and Kharijite Thought from the Perspective of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* and *Jamā’ah* (People of Prophetic Tradition and its Communities)’
- ‘The Senūssi Movement in Libya’:
    1. ‘Imām Muḥammad bin ‘Ali as-Senūssi and His Method of Establishment’
    2. ‘Muḥammad al-Mahdī as-Senūssi and Aḥmad ash-Sharīf’
    3. ‘Idrīs as-Senūssi and ‘Umar Mukhtār’
- ‘The Jurisprudence of Empowerment in the Holy Qur’ān’
- ‘The Prophetic Biography: An exposé of its facts and an analysis of its events’

- 'The Uplifting Biography of Abū Bakr as-Siddīq: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Section on Speech in the Biography of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful) 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb'
- 'The Generous Beneficence of 'Uthmān bin 'Affān: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Highest Demands in the Biography of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Biography of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and the Fifth Rightly Guided, Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib: His Personality and Rule'
- 'The Umayyad Dynasty: Factors for its Success and Causes of its Decline'
- 'Mu'āwiyah bin Abī Sufyān: His Personality and Rule'
- 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Indicators of Renewal and Guided Reformation on the Prophetic Path.

Dedication

I dedicate this book to every Muslim who is eager to show pride in the Religion of Allāh and I ask the Almighty by His Beautiful Names and Attributes to make it purely for His sake. Allāh, the Sublime, says: *"So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.]* (*al-Kahf*, 18:110)

Preface

Indeed all praise is for Allāh. We praise Him, seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from our own evils and bad deeds. Whosoever Allāh guides will not go astray and whomever He leads astray will not be guided. I declare that there is no god worthy of worship other than Allāh Alone without any partner and I declare that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger [*O you who believe! Fear Allāh (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. (Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always) and die not except in state of Islām [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allāh.* (*Āl-'Imrān*, 3:102).

"O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Ādam), and from him (Ādam) He created his wife (Ḥawwa) Eve, and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allāh from whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship)." (*an-Nisā'*, 4:1)

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allāh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth! He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), *he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hellfire and admitted to Paradise)."* (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33:70-1)

O Allāh! All praise belongs to You as befits Your Majesty and Your great Might. You are praised until You are pleased and if You are pleased all praise still belongs to You after that. To proceed:

This book constitutes one section from the work entitled: *'The Umayyad Dynasty: Factors for its Success and Causes of its Decline'*, itself a more detailed description of a period of significant reform and the famous *Mujaddid* (reviver or one who renews the Religion of the *Ummah*), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. It is a biographical account of his life story, his quest for knowledge, his most prominent achievements during al-Walīd and Sulaymān's caliphates, as well as his own caliphate, his accession of the seat of power and the administration of his state. He would go on to restore importance to the principles of *Shūra* (consultation) and justice, exhort his governors to abolish all unjust ordinances and dismiss all repressive subordinates from their ranks. He ordered the governors in his administration to return to the owners and the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) what had been confiscated from them under the rule of the former Caliphs. He administered justice for the people of Samarkand and he succeeded in reviving the spirit of freedom in his state, such as the freedom of thought, ideological, political and personal freedoms, and the freedom of trade and welfare. Attention is also afforded to his outstanding qualities, such as his profound fear of Allāh, the Sublime, his asceticism, humility and piety, his clemency and ability to forgive and pardon others, his patience and forbearance, and as an ardent

worshipper, he would earnestly supplicate to Allāh and implore for his prayers to be answered. The book takes a further look at the characteristics of renewal executed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, such as the adoption of *Shūra* (consultation), the transparency and integrity of his leadership, uprightness in the selection of trustees, and his revival of the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, as well as the principle of justice.

Among the criteria of a *Mujaddid* (reviver or one who renews the Religion of the *Ummah*) is that his *'Aqīdah* (doctrine of faith) must be manifestly pure, his practices sound, he must be a diligent scholar, and his renewal and reformation is to prevail over the intellectual and behavioural status quo. Another section of the book looks at how 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz led a campaign in the interests of the creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (People of Prophetic Example and its Communities), the Oneness of Allāh, His Most Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes, the concept of *Imān* (Faith), faith in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), belief in the *Ghayb* (Unseen), such as the existence of bliss and punishment of the grave, Resurrection, the Balance of the Scales on the Day of Judgement, the *Hawdh* (Pool where the Prophet will quench the thirst of the believers on the Day of Judgement), the *Sirāṭ* (Bridge" on the Day of Judgement), *Jannah* (Paradise), *an-Nār* (Hellfire) and that the believers will see their Lord in Paradise where they will be called to adhere to the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān), the Prophetic *Sunnah* (Tradition) and the *Sunnah* of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs.*

His stance in dealing with the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet) and the discord that had ensued between them, in addition to his position with the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family of the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is detailed herein, along with the strategies he employed to resolve complex matters involving the emergent Kharijite, Shi'ite and *Qadariyyah* sects.

A closer study of his personal life depicts his treatment of outsiders within the social realm, the attitude he had in the upbringing of his children and family, in terms of his choice of tutors and righteous mentors to supervise their education, which he determined in accordance with a strict programme of training and ubringing. In this manner, he specified the teaching methods that he wanted to be used and prioritised the subject matter to be taught, the effects of which proved to have a significant and fruitful impact on his son, 'Abd al-Mālik.

On a social level, accounts of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's interaction with the people and his interest in public welfare are related, for example, how he would take it upon himself to remind the masses to be mindful of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) and to correct false beliefs and misconceptions that had become prevalent, such as his rejection of tribalism. He further recognised the rights of creditors and therefore paid off the debts of the insolvent in a bid to settle matters. In a similar manner, he offered ransom for Muslim prisoners of war, gave to the needy, authorised for marital dowries to be paid from the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury), and by making

changes of this sort, he attempted to narrow the disparities between the social classes. He proved to be distinct in his attitude towards poets and the great importance he placed on the active participation of scholars in the process of reform, so much so that he immediately appointed a consultative body or *Shūra* council to remain close by his side for the purpose of keeping a watchful eye over him and his subordinates in the administration of state affairs.

Another notable feature related to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's life story are the schools of knowledge that were established during his reign and under the Umayyad dynasty, among which were the schools of ash-Shām (the Levant), al-Ḥijāz, Irāq, Egypt etc. Collectively, these schools followed the teachings of the *Tābi'īn* (second and third generations of pious followers) centred on the science of Qur'ānic exegesis and exerted great effort to enforce the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), of which 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz played a fundamental role in its codification. At the heart of the school curriculums were the teachings of purification and emulating the conduct of the *Tābi'īn,* as in the case of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri's school which will be looked at in greater detail. Thus the book talks about his school, its students, among who was the likes of Ayyūb as-Sukhtiyāni, Mālik bin Dīnār and Muḥammad bin Wāsi', and of how Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri requested permission to retire from his post. It further notes his relationship with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the letters he sent to him, which serve to depict the just attitude of the leader who complied with his wishes.

Of interest is 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's political stance and his reasons for lifting the siege of Constantinople, which was due to his insistence on comprehensive *Da'wah* (calling to Islām; preaching), the institutionalisation of scholars and the dissemination of knowledge directed at the masses. To this end, he dispatched earnest scholars to the shores of North Africa and elsewhere to educate the people and teach them the Book (i.e. Qur'ān) and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), in addition to sending messengers bearing invitations to Islām to the kings of India and other distant lands. Driven by his commitment to inculcate true values, he further believed that reform had to affect fiscal policy also, which is evident from his economic mandate that aimed to remove injustice through the redistribution of income and wealth in a sustainable manner towards the achievement of social well-being and prosperity. The book tells of the realization of these objectives as creating a viable atmosphere for development, the restitution of rights, liberation, a thriving economy and the enactment of a new agricultural policy that would prohibit the sale of foreign land, protect the interests of farmers and relieve them of the heavy taxes formerly imposed on them. It was on such a broad scale and through means of the above that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated reform, improvement, the recovery of destitute land and the initiation of infrastructural projects. His policies on public expenditure, for example, the provision of a social security welfare system, rationalising spending in the interests of the state, such as slashing the special privileges enjoyed by the Caliph and Umayyad generals, on top of his capping

administration and military funds, are stated. Another notable feature that is given due attention is the judicial institution under his rule and some of the independent rulings that were reached in the field of jurisprudence, such as his view on giving gifts to governors of state, his negation of rulings that went against religious legal texts and so forth.

In terms of administration, the book looks at his management policies and some of the most popular governors and subordinates within it, the likes of whom he selected based on his eagerness to depend on and delegate personnel from good, righteous backgrounds. Characteristic of his leadership style was his direct supervision of state matters, his capacity to manage, plan and organise affairs, the strategies he employed to combat administrative corruption, such as reprieving delegates of their livelihood, and his commitment to eradicating dishonesty and deceit. Likewise, he banned the acceptance of gifts or donations for fear of falling into bribery and he put a stop to extravagance and excess. Workers and delegates were further prohibited from engaging in trade and it was he who opened up the channels of communication between officials and their subjects. Remarkably, he accounted for money that had been wrongly deposited from the *Bayt al-Mal* (Public Treasury) by those in power before him. Foundations for the management concepts of centralisation and decentralisation were first laid under ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s administration, who equally underlined the need for flexibility. He divided his own time between the service of the state and its citizens, while exercising the principle of delegating the responsibly of running it.

As the title would suggest, the book exhibits 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's dedication to reform and renewal – whether fiscal, political, administrative or otherwise -- and his commitment to implement the precepts of Islāmic law upon the state and nation, and upon societies and individuals. In doing so, he demonstrated the effects of holding fast to the Holy Qur'ān and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and that a righteous Caliph means guidance, security and stability for his state, not to mention the victory, conquest, glory, honour and blissful existence lived by this great reformer until his death.

It can certainly be said that the emergence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the scene at this precise stage in history constituted a decisive turning point in the history of the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful), whereupon he assiduously took pains to return life to the regulation of Islāmic law and for the prospects of the rightly guided Caliphate to be dedicated to the precepts of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Of course, the manifestation of this unique phenomenon was not merely down to the heroism of the leader but ultimately on the capacity of Islām itself to revert political, legal and social life back to stability and bringing it in line with its basic principles.[1] In fact, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Caliphate provides historical proof against those to continue to claim that a state based on the teachings and legal rulings of Islām is prone to disaster and evident failure. On the contrary, the idea has not been dreamt up and history itself defies those who argue against it.

(1) *Fi Ta'asul al-Islami li-Tarikh* [*At the Root of Islāmic History*] by Dr 'Imad ad-Din Khalil, p. 62.

Let it be said to them: [*Produce your proof if you are truthful.*] (*al-Baqarah,* 2:111)

By adopting the methodologies of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and taking him as his role model, Nūr ad-Dīn Zangi (died 568 AH) made reformations that became the fruit of the nation, contributed to its advancement, revived its consciousness, beat its enemies, the Crusaders, who were purged from the *Bayt a-Muqaddas* (Holy House", i.e. Jerusalem) at the hands of his disciple, the most honourable leader and heroic commando, Salāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbi (may Allāh enhance the likes of him in our own generation).

Reformation – as understood by honest Muslims and not what is propagated by the enemies of Islām – is realised by Allāh's sending of messengers to the people, just as Shu'ayb (peace be upon him) said to his nation who were steeped in error and corruption in both belief and conduct: "*He said: 'O my people! Tell me if I have a clear evidence from my Lord and He has given me a good sustenance from Himself (shall I corrupt it by mixing it with unlawfully earned money). I wish not, in contradiction to you, to do that which I forbid you. I only desire reform to the best of my power. And my guidance cannot come except from Allāh, in Him I trust and to Him I repent."* (*Hud,* 11:88)

To have undertaken the task of reform, after the greatest of all human reformers, Muḥammad (prayers of Allāh and peace be upon him), on the Prophetic path were his rightly guided successors and the pious scholars of the *Ummah*

(Community of the Faithful), such as ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Due to having been afflicted by backwardness, waywardness, dispersion, weakness and degradation, today’s societies are definitely in most need of the guidance practiced by these early reformers as derived from the example of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

If truth be told, the jurisprudence of the Islāmic historical movement guides us to the factors that lie behind its many successes and at the foundations that form the root of its staggering triumph. Most importantly, there existed purity of creed, clarity of approach, the application of Allāh’s law within the state, righteous leadership that looked to the Light of Allāh for guidance and who enacted the *Sunan* (Traditions; Laws; Ways) of Allāh in the nurturing and education of communities. Knowledge of the ills and conditions of societies and nations, the secrets of history, the schemes and ploys of the enemy – whether that was the Crusaders, Jews, atheists, false cults or innovated sects – enabled the righteous government to act with them accordingly and whereby every party was granted its inalienable rights. As a devout Muslim, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was not only graciously tolerant to the members of other creeds but also solicitous towards them. Hence, cases of revival jurisprudence and renaissance initiatives prove to constitute a well-nested, long-established, complex history that cannot be absorbed only by understanding the Book of Allāh, the Almighty and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is connected to the preserved, guided jurisprudence of our great forebears.

Rather, knowledge of revival phenomena comes from knowing its manifestations, its features and characteristics, the reasons for its existence, causes for its removal and how it has been a benefit within Islāmic history and in the revival experience.

It is without doubt that this nation has not only become uprooted because of the relegation of God and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but the occurrence of defeat on so many levels expresses such relegation as a fatal culture. In terms of the "correct culture", then, this is built on the Muslim identity – the Muslim family, Muslim society and Muslim State – based on the strong precepts of the Book of Allāh, the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and on the guidance of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs*. The one who follows this way is on the straight path and it goes without saying that the genius of establishing the "correct" civilisation is in preserving unadulterated Islām till this present day with the help and will of God.

The biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz offers us insight into the correct concept of the term "reformation", that is, the original Qur'ānic concept as it is properly understood and applied by our reformist *'Ulama'* (scholars), not in the modern Western sense that had been coined in the minds of some political thinkers who then spread their false ideas to unfortunately receive some acceptance from certain Muslim

imitators of the West. Today, the idea of revolution refers to broader, more comprehensive and deeper reformation that consists of gradual, non-violent, small changes, although it has somehow been rendered synonymous by the West with sudden, radical upheaval that is both violent and sporadic. However, this fails to encapsulate the correct meaning that is derived from the Holy Qur'ān, which implies a more comprehensive, greater revolution, which is always directed at the greater good, whilst the revolutions of others might conversely be in the interests of the already corrupt, or for the purpose of disposing one authority for another, or a governor for another governor, etc.[1]

As for he who longs to tread the Prophetic path and the course of the Caliphate upon having declared the sincerity of his reformation mission to Allāh, the Sublime, then Allāh will facilitate his success and loosen the people's tongues to profusely praise and commend him, just as the Libyan poet, Ahmad Rafi al-Mahdawi, wrote:

"When God loves the heart of His servant,

The Gifts of the Opener are bestowed upon him;

When God refines the intention of a reformer,

The souls of His slaves incline towards Him."

I ask Allāh, the Sublime, to make this work purely for his sake, of benefit to His servants and a source of reward for me and my brothers who helped towards the publishing of this

(1) *'Athar al-Imām* Muḥammad *Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmi* [The Sayings of Imām Muhammad Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmi] (2/6).

work by His good grace and generosity. I humbly request for every Muslim who takes up this book not to forget this poor slave when supplicating to his Lord for His forgiveness, mercy and pleasure. *"My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves."* (*an-Naml,* 27:19). Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Whatever of mercy (i.e. of good), Allāh may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise."* (*Fatir, 35:2).*

Peace and blessings of Allāh be on our Master, Muḥammad, and on his family and Companions.

Glory and Praise be to Allāh. I declare that there is no god worthy of worship other than You. In You I seek forgiveness and unto You I repent. To conclude, we invoke all praise for Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds.

A poor servant in pursuit of his Lord's forgiveness, mercy and pleasure,

'Ali Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallābi

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Part One

The Era of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

From Birth to Caliphate -

His Name, Title, Epithet and Family:

His name was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm bin Abī 'al-'Āṣ bin Umayyah bin 'Abd Shams bin 'Abd Manāf, the eminent *Imām* (leader), *Mujtahid* (issuer of independent legal rulings), *Hafiẓ* (one who has committed the entire Qur'ān to memory) ascetic and slave, the true *Amīr al-Mu'mimīn* (Commander of the Faithful), Abū Hafs, the Qurayshi Umayyad, al-Madani (from al-Madīnah) and later al-Maṣri (from Egypt), the rightly guided, pious Caliph and "*Ashajj*" (the Mark; Scar) of the Umayyad tribe.(1)

He was one of the Imāms of *Ijtihad* (the process of independent law-making based on the Islāmic *Sharī'ah*

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/144).

and other legal sources)[1] and one of the Rightly Guided *Caliphs*. He was a person of outstanding morals and ethics, well-rounded, refined, diplomatic and politically-minded who showed a keen interest and passion for justice whenever possible. He possessed extensive knowledge as an acclaimed *Faqīh* (jurist) of unadulterated intelligence and understanding. He was devoutly repentant, consciously God-fearing and upright in his obedience to Allāh. Despite holding the seat of the Caliphate, he remained an ascetic who pronounced the truth with firm conviction to those around him, including the many governors who detested his inquisitions of them, or his deducting their salaries, or repossession of their illegitimate acquisitions. He relentlessly discouraged and punished laxity of morals. In fact, they did not cease to hate him up until the moment he was poisoned, upon which he gained conviction and happiness, not counting his high ranking as one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in the view of the people of knowledge.[2] As for his speech (may Allāh have mercy on him) it was nothing other than eloquent and articulate.[3]

His Father:

His name was 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm, a name that acquired a status as one of the finest Umayyad leaders. Courageous and generous, he held the position of Governor of Egypt for more than twenty years. His qualities

(1) *Ibid* (5/114).
(2) *Ibid* (5/120).
(3) *Ibid* (5/136).

of piety and righteousness were so resolved that when he wanted to marry, he said to his assistant: "Collect four-hundred *Dinar* (coins; units of account) of my good money for I want to marry from a household that possesses goodness." He would later marry Umm 'Āṣim, the daughter of 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), i.e. the granddaughter of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, whose name it is said was Layla.[1] It is noteworthy to mention here that his marrying into the family of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb would not have been so, were it not for his upstanding reputation and virtuous character.

Even as a youth, he possessed a remarkably good character as regards his dedication to pursue knowledge and his obvious interest in the Prophetic *Aḥadīth* (sayings). In favour of his own merit, he once sat in the company of Abū Hurayrah and others among the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions), his study of the *Aḥadīth* continued to excel even after his appointment as Governor of Egypt. Thereupon, he would habitually appeal to *ash-Shām* (the Levant) to send him what they had been informed pertaining to the sayings of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) apart from what had been narrated by Abū Hurayrah, since he was already familiar with those.[2] Nevertheless, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's father was the type of person who was accustomed to addressing important

(1) *'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān: Sirāthu wa Athruhu fi Aḥdāth al-'Aṣr al-Umawi* ['Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwan: His Biography and Legacy from the Events of the Umayyad Era], p. 58.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (474/).

matters, both before and after he became the Governor of Egypt. From the time he entered Egypt, he longed to rule over it and for that reason, he exerted great effort from then onwards to one day meet his aspirations, which he did;(1) in actuality, not only did he assume this position but became one of the finest and most generous Umayyad Governors.(2) Every day, a thousand dishes would be prepared and placed around his house, in addition to a further one hundred dishes brought round by the tribes. On the subject of his generosity, he used to say: "If a man allows me to give him something knowing that it is from me, then whatever I have of his is greater than what he has of mine."(3)

Many a historian has commended his distinct munificence, a quality that was coupled with certainty of faith in the fact that Allāh, the Sublime, bestows sustenance on whosoever He wills. Concerning this he would say: "How strange it is that a *Mu'min* (believer) believes that Allāh provides sustenance to whosoever He wills yet he keeps his money locked away at the expense of great reward and commendation!" In the same manner, 'Abd al-'Azīz was a God-fearing man, which is evident from the last words he uttered while on his deathbed: "I wish I were of no importance. If only I were this free-flowing water or plant in the land of the Ḥijāz!"(4)

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(1) *Al-Wilāt wa Kitāb al-Qaḍāh* [Governors and Judges] by al-Kundī, p. 54.

(2) *Mu'jiz al-'Islām* [The Miracle of Islām] by Khālid Muḥammad Khālid, p. 55.

(3) *Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān,* p. 55.

(4) *Ibid,* p.56; an extract from *al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] by Ibn Kathīr.

His Mother:

She was known by the epithet Umm 'Āṣim, the daughter of 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). Her father, 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the *Faqīh* (jurist) and nobleman, also known as Abu 'Amr, the Qurashi of the 'Adwi tribe, was born during the days of Prophethood and related traditions from his father and mother, Jamīlah bint Thābit bin Abī al-Aqlah, a woman from the *Anṣār* (Helpers). Her father, Thābit bin Abī al-Aqlah, was tall in stature and from nobility. He was devout, righteous and charitable, and as far as his speech was concerned, he was a talented and lucid poet. This was the character of Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's grandfather from his mother's side. He died in the seventieth year and was eulogised by his brother, Ibn 'Umar, in the words:

"Had only the fate of death left 'Āṣim *alone,*

So that we might come and go together."[1]

As for the person of his maternal grandmother, she held a special status with 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). On the authority of 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr bin Aslam, on the authority of his father who reported it from his grandfather, Aslam, he said: "While I was with 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) in al-Madīnah during one of his frequent journeys in disguise to survey the condition of his people, we overheard a milkmaid

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(1) *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (797/).

refusing to obey her mother's orders to sell adulterated milk by diluting it with water. When her mother insisted that 'Umar would be none the wiser, the girl replied: "O mother! By Allāh! I would never obey him in public and disobey him in private. For if 'Umar will not come to know of it, the Lord of 'Umar surely knows!" Upon hearing every word, 'Umar then gave instructions for the door of their house to be marked.

The following morning, 'Umar said: 'O Aslam, pass by that house and purchase milk from the girl to see if she kept her resolve', and so he did to learn that the milk was unadulterated as she had vowed. 'Umar summoned the girl and her mother to his court and told them what he had heard. As a reward, he offered to marry the girl to his son 'Āṣim. She accepted, and from this union was born a girl named Layla that would in due course become the mother of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."[1] It is reported that 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had a vision in his dream, after which he used to say: "I wish I knew the man from my offspring bearing a mark on his face who will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with injustice and oppression."[2] 'Abdullah bin 'Umar used to say that when the al-Khaṭṭāb family saw that Bilal bin 'Abdullah had a mole on his face they took it as a direct sign of his appointment, until Allāh brought them 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.[3]

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by Ibn al-Hakm, p. 19-20; *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by Ibn al-Jawziyyah, p. 10.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (122/5).

(3) *Ibid* (5/122).

Birthdate and place (61 AH, al-Madīnah):

Historians have shown some discrepancy about the exact year in which he was born, although the majority suggest that it was in 61 AH, a date that coincides with the fact that he died at the age of forty in the year 101 AH.(1) Some sources mention that he was born in Egypt; however, this is hardly plausible given that his father, 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān bin al-Ḥakm, became the Governor of Egypt in 65 AH after authority had been wrested by Marwān bin al-Ḥakm from the then standing governor, 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr (may Allāh be pleased with them). Thereafter, Marwān's son, 'Abd al-'Aziz, became his successor over it but prior to which there is nothing to indicate that 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān had ever resided in Egypt. On the contrary, he and the Banī Marwān (tribe) were based in al-Madīnah.(2) The acclaimed adh-Dhahabi mentions that he was born in al-Madīnah during Yazīd's era.(3)

"The Mark of the Umayyad Tribe":

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was known by the agnomen "*Ashajj*" (Mark) or *"Ashajj Banī Marwān"* (the Mark of the Marwān Tribe), a name which stems from an incident that took place during his childhood. One day, at a time when his father was the Governor of Egypt, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz went into one of his father's stables in order to see the horses

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] (12/676).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (154/).

(3) *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* [The Memorial of the Hadith Masters] (1/118-120).

when a horse suddenly hit him in the face and caused him to sustain a head-wound. As his father was wiping away the blood, he said to 'Umar: "If you were to be the one with the scar, then you would be the happiest of all the Umayyads."(1) Upon seeing the mark from the blow to his head, al-Asbagh, his brother, remarked: "Allāh is the Greatest! This is the one who holds the title of "the Scar of the Marwān Tribe!" 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to say: "There will be among my offspring a man with a scar on his face who will fill the earth with justice just as it was filled with injustice and oppression."(2) Reportedly, *al-Farūq* (The Distinguisher of Truth from Falsehood, i.e. 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb), once had a vision that also pointed to this, as did numerous other people to the extent that it became common knowledge and substantiated the claim made by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's father and brother regarding the mark on his face being a sign that he would be the one who would fill the land with justice.(3)

Siblings:

'Umar's father, 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān, had ten sons named 'Umar, 'Abū Bakr, Muḥammad, 'Āṣim, all of whom were to Layla bint 'Āṣim bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, in addition to six more children by other women and these were called

(1) *Al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah* [The Beginning and End]; an extract from *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/20).

(2) *Al-Ma'ārif* [The Facts] by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 362.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/20) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

al-Asbagh, Suhl, Suhayl, Umm al-Hakm, Zayyan and Umm al-Banīn.[1] 'Āṣim was the name ascribed to his mother's *kunya* (epithet), meaning that she known as Umm 'Āṣim (the Mother of 'Āṣim).[2]

Children:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) had fourteen sons named 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Abdullah, Ibrahīm, Ishāq, Ya'qūb, Bakr, Walīd, Mūsā, 'Āṣim, Yazīd, Zayyan and 'Abdullah. He also had three girls called Amīnah, Umm 'Ammār and Umm 'Abdullah. In fact, accounts vary concerning the number of children 'Umar had. While some give a total number of fourteen boys, which is in agreement with Ibn Qutaybah's account, others state twelve boys and six girls, such as Ibn al-Jawzi;[3] the general consensus, however, is that he had twelve sons. It is a well-known fact that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz departed from this world, he left behind no money to his children apart from an insignificant sum of nineteen *Dirhams*, compared to Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik who bequeathed a grand sum of one million *Dirhams* to his sons. Nevertheless, it was but a few years on that one of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's sons was seen donating one hundred horses for the sake of Allāh in one day, whilst people were said to have witnessed one of Hishām bin 'Abd al-

(1) *Al-Ma'ārif* [The Facts] by Ibn Qutaybah, p. 362.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/22) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Ibid* (1/23).

Mālik's sons receiving charity.[1] Therefore, glory be to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds!

Wives:

'Umar grew up in al-Madīnah and naturally acquired the etiquettes of its people. He was influenced by its scholars and dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge from its *Shuyūkh* (religious leaders). He was accustomed to sitting in the company of Quraysh's elders in favour of being with his peers, a habit which stuck with him even after he attained prominence. Upon his father's death, his paternal uncle, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* , 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, became his guardian and so 'Umar became like one of his own children but whom 'Abd al-Mālik very much favoured so much so that he married him to his daughter, Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik. A pious and virtuous woman, she was significantly influenced by 'Umar, which even extended to what she owned of the luxuries of this world. As poet succinctly said about her:

"The daughter of the Caliph and the Caliph was her grandfather,

The sister of the Caliphs and the Caliph is her husband."

More specifically, the above verse alludes to her relationship as the daughter of 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, the granddaughter of Marwān bin al-Hakm, the sister of al-

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 338; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/24).

Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, Sulayman bin 'Abd al-Mālik, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik and Hishīm bin 'Abd al-Mālik, and the wife of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh be pleased with him). Her special status has led some to believe that there has not been a woman like her until today.(1) She bore 'Umar's three sons, Ishāq, Ya'qūb and Mūsā. As for his wife, Lamas bint 'Ail bin al-Hadith, she bore his children, 'Abdullah, Bakr and Umm 'Ammār, and his wife, Umm 'Othman bint Shu'ayb bin Mayan, bore his son, Ibrahīm. The rest of 'Umar's children, namely, 'Abd al-Mālik, al-Walīd, 'Āṣim, Yazīd, 'Abdullah, 'Abd al-'Azīz, Zayyan, Amīnah, and Umm 'Abdullah, were bore by his wife, Umm Waleed.(2)

Physical Features:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was dark in complexion, slim-faced, small in stature and heavyset. He had hollow eyes and at the front of his head he had a quiff of hair that had a grey streak running through it.(3) Regarding his appearance, it has otherwise been said: "He was fair-skinned with a slim face. He was handsome and slim." Another description states: "He was fair-skinned with a slim face, handsome, slim and he had a nice beard."(4)

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(1) *Ibid* (12680/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p.314-5.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fil-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/58).

(4) *Al-Kitab al-Jami' li-Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [A Complete Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/11); *al-Athar al-Warida* (1/58).

Factors that Contributed to Shaping 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Personality:

Family Life:

'Umar grew up al-Madīnah. Once he had reached maturity, which was at such a young age, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb would go to his mother to ask about his whereabouts. Upon returning home, 'Umar would say to his mother: "I hope to be like my maternal uncle" (referring to 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb). At that point, she would tell him: "There is no doubt that you are like him", and she would repeat herself more than once. When he grew up, his father, 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Marwān, travelled to Egypt to occupy the office of Governor, but it was not before long that he wrote to his wife, Umm 'Āṣim, instructing her to make her way to him there. Startled by his proposal, she immediately sought advice from her paternal uncle, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, informing him that she had received a letter from her husband, to which he remarked: "O my niece! He is your husband. You should catch up with him." However, as she was about to leave, he said: "Leave the young boy (meaning 'Umar) with us, for he

most resembles us, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family of the Prophet) of you all", and so, she left him behind. When she arrived in the presence of 'Abd al-'Aziz, he began to look around for his son, although when he could not see him, he asked: "Where is 'Umar?" She then informed him of what happened with 'Abdullah and that he had asked her to leave 'Umar behind in order that he resembled the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Upon hearing this, 'Abd al-'Aziz was delighted and so he wrote to his brother, 'Abd al-Mālik, to tell him, who in reply stated that he should send 'Umar one thousand *Dinar* on a monthly basis.(1) 'Umar would later go to his father in Egypt as an upstanding Muslim, which wholly reflected his upbringing in al-Madīnah between his maternal uncles from the family of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, all of whom, along with the society of *Sahaba* (Companions), were undoubtedly instrumental in shaping his personality.(2)

His Early Dedication to the Pursuit of Knowledge and Memorisation of the Holy Qur'ān:

A childhood love for the pursuit of knowledge, studying and reading distinguished 'Umar from an early age, as did his eagerness to remain in the scholarly gatherings of al-Madīnah. In those days, al-Madīnah represented a beacon of knowledge and righteousness, given that it was full of scholars, jurists and virtuous people. One of the first manifestations of

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Biography of 'Umar] by 'Abd al-hakm, p. 24-5.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/58).

'Umar's guidance was his evident longing to become a learned scholar during his childhood, a path which he began to pursue by devoting his time to studying literature and the sciences.[1] He was able to prove this dedication when he collected together the entire manuscript of the Qur'ān, which was not only a great accomplishment in itself but it also facilitated his memorisation of it, self-purification and his ability to apply the knowledge he had gained. From that point onwards, his outlook was deeply shaped by what the Qur'ān taught with respect to Allāh the Almighty, life, the universe, Heaven and Hell, Decree and Fate, and the reality of death. It is said that he would cry at the mention of death irrespective of his age. Upon hearing about this, his mother wrote to him and asked: "What makes you cry?" He answered: "The remembrance of death", a response which caused his mother to weep when she heard it.[2] There is no exaggeration to say that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz lived his entire life by the Book of Allāh, the Sublime, whether in contemplation of it or in exercising its injunctions. Among the stances he took in accordance with the Holy Qur'ān were:

1) On the authority of Ibn Abī Dhabi who said: "I was informed by someone who witnessed 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, at the time when he was the commander of al-Madīnah, reciting the following Verse to a man: [*And when they shall be thrown into a narrow place thereof, chained together, they shall exclaim therein for destruction]* (*al-Furqān,* 25:13),

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] (12/679).
(2) *Ibid* (12/678).

at which point 'Umar began to sob so overwhelmingly that he stood up from his gathering and entered his house, after which the people dispersed."(1) The meaning of the Verse is that when those liars will be put into the tight constraints of the Hellfire with the reckoning of the Hour, their hands will be shackled to their necks in chains. "*They shall therein exclaim for destruction*", wherein "destruction" here refers to the people crying out in regret of their disobedience to Allāh in this world and for not believing in what was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as they face their punishment.(2)

a. According to Abī Mawdūd who said: "I was informed that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz read one day: "*Neither you (O* Muḥammad, *peace and blessings be upon him) do any deed nor recite any portion of the* Qur'ān, *nor you (mankind) do any deed (good or evil) but We are witness thereof when you are doing it*" (Yūnus, 10:61). He then began to cry so hysterically even the people in the house heard him. At that point, Fāṭimah (his wife) went in but started to cry at seeing him crying, which caused everyone in the house to cry too. 'Abd al-Mālik happened to enter the house and when he saw them in that state, he inquired: "O father! What are you crying for?" He replied: "It is fine,

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p. 83.

(2) *Dumuu' al-Qurā'* [Tears of the Reciters] by Muhammad Shuman, p. 107; an extract from Ibn Jarīr's *Tafsīr* [Exegesis].

my son. Your father only wishes that he neither knew the world nor it knew him. By Allāh, O son! I fear for your family. By Allāh! I fear that I will be among the people of the Hellfire."[1] The meaning of this Verse is that Allāh, the Sublime, informed his Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that He knows all his conditions and states, as well as those of his *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) and all creation, every second of every minute of every hour. Not so much as a mustard seed, however miniscule or insignificant, in the entire heavens and earth escapes His Knowledge or Sight, and there is nothing too big or too small except that it has been recorded down. As He says: "*And with Him are the keys of the 'Ghayb' (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.*" (*al-An 'ām,* 6:59). Thus, Allāh informs us that He knows the movement of the trees and all other inanimate fixed objects, just as He knows the swift movements of creatures, about which He says: "*There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then to their Lord they shall all be gathered*" (*al-'An 'ām*, 6: 38). Allāh, the Sublime, also says: [*And*

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p.91.

no moving (living) creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allāh." (*Hūd*, 11:6). And so, Allāh knows the movements of such things, just as He says He knows when worship is being observed: "*And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, Who sees you (O* Muḥammad, *may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when you stand up (alone at night for prayer). And your movements among those who fall prostrate (to Allāh in the prayers)*] (*ash-Shu'arā"*, 26:217-19). Thus, Allāh is saying that when one undertakes an action, He sees and hears it.(1)

2) According to 'Abd al-A'lā bin Abī 'Abdullah al-'Atari who said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz coming out on the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday congregational prayer) wearing a grubby garment and there was an Ethiopian man walking behind him. When he reached the people, the Ethiopian went back, then 'Umar went up to two men and said: "May Allāh have mercy on you both", at which point he ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) and began to deliver the sermon, reciting the Verse: "*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown.*" (*at-Takwīr*, 81:1). He then said: "And what is the affair of the sun?" He went on: "*And when the stars shall fall*" (*ibid*:2) up to the Verses: "*And when Hellfire shall be set ablaze. And when Paradise shall be brought near*" (*ibid*: 12-13). At that point he began to cry, as did the people in the *Masjid* (mosque)

(1) Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr* [Interpretation].

until it began to shake and its walls wept with them."[1] This Verse depicts a description of the events on the Day of Judgement when hearts will be full of anguish, violent fear will seize them and anxiety will prevail therein. This is the Day for which people of understanding prepare, on which nobody will evade blame and accountability, about which the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) would say: "Whoever wants to see the Day of Judgment as if with his very own eyes, let him contemplate on the *Sūrah* (Chapter) "*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown*" (*at-Takwīr,* 81)[2] In a *Hadīth Marfū'* (narration that is traced back directly to the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him), the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever secretly wants to see the Day of Judgment as if with his naked eye, let him recite (the chapters): "*When the sun shall be wound round and its light is lost and overthrown*" (*at-Takwīr,* 81); "*When the heaven shall be cleft asunder*" (*al-Infiṭār,* 82); and "*When the heaven shall be split asunder*" (*al-Inshiqāq,* 84)."[3]

a. Maymūn bin Mahrān is reported to have said: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz recited the Verse: "*The mutual rivalry (for piling up world things) diverts you.*" (*at-Takāthur,*

(1) *Dumu' al-Qurrā'* [Tears of the Reciters], pp. 111-2.

(2) As-Sa'adi's *Tafsīr* [Interpretation], 912.

(3) Reported in at-Tirmidhi, no. 3333 and al-Hākim (2/515) (4/576); adh-Dhahabi and al-Albāni have authenticated them in the *as-Saḥīḥah* [Verification] (3/70).

102:1) and began to cry. He then said: '"*Until you visit the graves*" (*ibid*: 2), while the graves are but a visiting place and one must return to either *al-Jannah* (Paradise) or to *an-Nār* (Hellfire)'."[1] Some of the positions that illustrate the type of influence the Holy Qur'ān had on 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's personality include:

i. Social Environment:

One's surrounding social environment plays a decisive role in shaping men and building their characters and in this respect 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz lived in an era wherein *Taqwā* (God-consciousness), *Salaḥ* (goodness), a thirst for acquiring knowledge and applying the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān) and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) prevailed. A number of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were still in al-Madīnah, which allowed him to narrate *aḥadīth* (Prophetic sayings) from the likes of 'Abdullah bin Ja'far bin Abī Ṭālib, as-Sā'ib bin Yazīd and Suhl bin Sa'ad who gave him a cup which the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had drunk from. As for Anas bin Mālik, he said: "I never saw anyone imitate the prayer of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) like this young man", in reference to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.[2] In this manner, residing in al-Madīnah as part of that society had an

(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, no. 425.
(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/114).

enormous impact on his temperament, his sense of faith and his spiritual adherence in making the eminent and intellectual person 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz became.[1]

ii. His Learning at the Hands of al-Madīnah's Senior Fuqahā' (Jurists) and Scholars:

'Umar's father, 'Abd al-'Aziz, entrusted him to the care of Ṣāliḥ bin Kīsān who was one of the most learned and pious men of al-Madīnah . 'Umar received his education under the supervision of Ṣāliḥ, who was very particular about his role in disciplining 'Umar. For instance, he made it incumbent upon 'Umar to pray every prayer with the congregation in the *masjid* (mosque), but when 'Umar turned up late one day, the congregation informed Ṣāliḥ who questioned him about it, asking: "What business were you engaged in?" 'Umar replied: "I was sorting out my hair", to which Ṣāliḥ remarked: "You love yourself that much that you would let it influence your prayers?!" He immediately wrote to 'Abd al-'Azīz informing him about it, at which instant his father sent a delegate to 'Umar who was instructed to not speak a word before shaving his son's head completely.[2] From then on, 'Umar desired to imitate the manner in which the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed: ardently and meticulously. In keeping with that, he would prolong his bowing and prostrating and lighten his standing and sitting,

(1) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawiyyah fi Hayāt 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 23.

(2) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/678).

and as the authentic narration states: "He would glorify Allāh ten times in each bow and prostration."[1]

When his father performed the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage, passing through al-Madīnah on his way, he enquired to Ṣāliḥ bin Kīsān about his son and Ṣāliḥ's response to him was: "Allāh is not known in the heart of anyone more than this boy's."[2] Among the *Shuyūkh* (religious elders) who had an influence on 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was 'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah bin Mas'ūd who 'Umar highly revered and had a great thirst for his knowledge and etiquettes so much so that he would continue to frequent him even when he was the *Amir* (Governor) of al-Madīnah. 'Umar would express his admiration for his *Shaykh* and thereby frequented his sittings more and more. On one occasion, he said to a gathering for the blind: "'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah bin Mas'ūd is more beloved to me than a thousand *Dīnārs* (gold coins; units of account).[3] During 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Caliphate he would acknowledge his *Shaykh*'s knowledge by making such statements as: "Were 'Ubaydullah alive, no legal opinion other than his would be issued", "I wish I could have just one day with 'Ubaydullah" and so forth.[4] 'Ubaydullah was in fact the *Muftī* (the title given to the official issuer of legal rulings) of al-Madīnah during his time and one of the seven *Fuqahā'* (jurists),[5] about whom az-

(1) *Ibid* (12/682).
(2) *Ibid* (12/678).
(3) '*Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 59; *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/250); *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn Hajr (7/22).
(4) *Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 59.
(5) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/475).

Zuhri said: "'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah was a sea among the seas of knowledge."[1] A writer of poetry, Ibn Mas'ūd wrote the following verses to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

"In the name of He Who sent down the verses from Him,

If you only knew what is to come about,

Therefore be on your guard that you might benefit from cautiousness;

And be patient in the face of sure fate and be grounded in it,

Should an undesirable fate befall you;

What is the class of a man living in ease,

Except that it shall one day be followed by trouble?"[2]

He died later this year (98/99 AH).[3]

Another of 'Umar's *Shuyūkh* (religious elders) was Said bin al-Musayyib, the biographical account of whom was related during 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān's era, who would not see any of the governors except for 'Umar.[4] Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb was also his *Shaykh,* about whom Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib would say: "'Abdullah bin 'Umar most resembles his father and Sālim most resembles his father."[5]

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(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*

(3) *Ibid* (4/478-9)..

(4) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawiyyah fi Hayāt 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 25.

(5) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/459).

Ibn 'Umar used to love his son Sālim, for which he would get blamed, and he would say:

"They blame me concerning Sālim and I blame them;

While Salim is the skin between the eyes and nose."[1]

Sālim's mother's epithet was *Umm Walad* (Mother of a Boy) supposedly in reference to Ibn Abī az-Zinād. The people of al-Madīnah used to hate the idea of taking on women to bear children until the likes of 'Alī bin al-Husayn, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad and Sālim bin 'Abdullah emerged who caused the people of al-Madīnah to excel in knowledge, devotion, worship and piety and which caused their contemporaries to be awe of concubines. Imām Mālik says: "None of Sālim's peers resembled the righteous forebears in asceticism, virtue and lifestyle like him. He would wear a *thawb* (long dress-like garment worn by men) worth just two *Dirham* (coins; units of currency) and he would buy with his left hand in order that it may bear the burden."[2] Upon witnessing his nice appearance, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik asked Sālim: "Do you eat anything in particular?" He answered: "Bread and oil, and if there is any meat I eat that too." So 'Umar said to him: "Do you like eating that?" He replied: "If I do not desire to eat it then I leave it until I do."[3] On one particular day, Sālim bin 'Abdullah entered upon Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik wearing ragged, rough clothes but nevertheless Sulaymān

(1) *Ibid* (4/460).
(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4/460).
(3) *Ibid*.

welcomed him all the same and even took him up and seated him by his side, while 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was sitting with the gathering. A man belonging to an outside tribe therefore asked 'Umar: "Can your maternal uncle not wear something more dignified than this to enter upon the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Believers)? It is upon the speaker to wear something of value." 'Umar therefore said to him: "I do not see these clothes worn by my uncle putting him in your place nor do I see the clothes you wear raising you to his status."[1]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was mentored and educated under many scholars and *Fuqahā'* (jurists), numbering at least thirty-three, eight of whom were honourable *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and the other twenty-five were *Tabi'un* (second and third generation followers).[2] Thus, he acquired their knowledge and manners and devotedly attended their sittings until this nurturing and discipline notably influenced his character and behaviour.[3] He was distinct regarding the firmness of his personality, his earnestness in dealing with matters, resoluteness, intellectual assiduity, perpetual consideration of the Qur'ān, strong will and great disdain for idle talk and joking.[4] In fact, these factors were the main contributors shaping his character, along with the lessons he drew from those devout scholars who carried on their

(1) *Ibid* (4/461).

(2) *Musnad 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Umar* [The Supported Narrations of the Commander of the Believers, 'Umar], p. 33.

(3) *Al-Jawānib at-Tarbawiyyah fi Hayat 'Umarbin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Educational Aspects in the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/67).

(4) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by az-Zahli, p. 30.

shoulders the great responsibility of giving attention to the children of the governors, judges and high-ranking officials, since their righteousness was for the greater good of the Islāmic *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful).

iii. Knowledgeable Status:

Translators agree that he was "The *Imām* (Muslim Leader) of His Era", a name that was given to him by both Imām Mālik and Imām Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah.[1] About him, Mujāhid said: "We would tell him what we knew and we would not leave until we had learned from him."[2] Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the teacher of scholars."[3] Adh-Dhahabi says: "He was an *Imām* (Leader), a *Faqīh* (jurist) and a *Mujtahid* (one who issues independent legal opinions). He was well informed of the *Sunan* (traditions), knowledgeable on important matters, a *Hāfiẓ* (one who has committed the entire Qur'ān to memory), obedient to Allāh and extremely conscious of good conduct and acting fairly, in likeness to his grandfather from his mother's side. He was equal to Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri in asceticism and to az-Zuhri in knowledge. His words and actions were requested by the *Fuqahā'* (jurists) and scholars, like when Imām al-Layth bin Sa'ad wrote a short letter to Imām Mālik bin Anas (may Allāh

(1) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz]* (1/67).

(2) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn Ḥajr (7/405); *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz]* (1/67).

(3) *Tārīkh Abī Zar'ah* [Abī Zar'ah's History], p. 255; *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz]* (1/67).

be pleased with them) in which al-Layth stated he needed – numerous times – a sound opinion, which is why Imām Malik went to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz concerning some of his questions.[1] Thus, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is mentioned in the books of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) pertaining to all four schools of thought because of his need to follow the school he thought was necessary, such as his concluding of Ḥanafi rulings in reference to his actions and deeds, a stance that distinguished 'Umar as the grandson of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), according to al-Qurashi in *al-Jawāhir al-Maḍī'ah* [The Dazzling Jewels]. However, it is worth mentioning that he would also conform to other opinions, which some have failed to acknowledge in an attempt to convey him as the popular Caliph and Imām.[2]

His name appears recurrently in the books of the Shāfi'i authors and has therefore been rendered by an-Nawawi who refined their names and language, which he states at the beginning of his work were repetitive and needed shortening. As for the adherents of the Māliki school, their books contain copious reference to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, far more than all others, given that Mālik was the Imām of the school who required the legal rulings and statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in many areas, as mentioned in Mālik's *al-Muwatta'* [The Well-Trodden Path].[3]

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(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz* [The Cited Stories of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1/70).

(2) *Al-Jawāhir al-Maḍī'ah* [The Dazzling Jewels] (4/552); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah* (1/71).

(3) See *al-Muwatta'* [The Well-Trodden Path], no. 305; 592; 594; 614.

Regarding Ḥanbali works, 'Umar is given ample mention as the one about whom Imām Aḥmad said: "I do not know of any speech of the *Tabi'īn* (second and third generation of followers) that constitutes proof except for the speech of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz which is sufficient in itself."[1] The following statement of Imām Aḥmad is sufficient enough for us too: "If you see a man who loves 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and says good things about him, then know that behind that lies good, if Allāh wills."[2] Whoever wants to delve deeply into 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's knowledge and discern his knowledgeable status, let him refer to the following books: *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Prof. Hayat Muḥammad Jabār, which is an intellectual treatise comprising over two volumes; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr Muḥammad Sa'ad Shaqīr, which is an intellectual treatise presented at doctorate level; and *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [An Encyclopaedia of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Jurisprudence] by Muḥammad Rawas Qal'aji. By the permission of Allāh, we will herein get to see 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) at play in relation to doctrine, worship, *Sharī'ah* policy, administration of the state, financial management, judicial execution, Islāmic preaching and his observance of the Book (i.e. the Qur'ān), the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in his footsteps and lifestyle.

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] quoted in *Al-Athār al-Wāridah* (1/72).

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 61.

Part II

'Umar during the Caliphate of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz enjoys the status of those scholars who were close to the *Caliphs* and imparted considerable bearing on them through their advice and directed their policies based on their opinions and consultation. 'Umar occupied an eminent position in the Umayyad household, which is clear from 'Abd al-Mālik's veneration of him and his amazement at 'Umar's brilliance during his youth, so much so that he favoured him over many of his own sons and even married him to his daughter. In spite of this, 'Umar did not make any contributions of this sort during 'Abd al-Mālik's rule due to his young age and his preoccupation with the pursuit of knowledge in al-Madīnah. However, Ibn al-Jawzi maintains that he once wrote to 'Abd al-Mālik reminding him of the responsibility he bore on his shoulders, in which he said: "To proceed: You are a shepherd and responsible for everyone in your flock. Anas bin Malik informed us that he

heard the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: 'Everyone is a shepherd and responsible for his (or her) flock'.[1] "*Allāh! None has the right to be worshipped but He. Surely, He will gather you together on the Day* of *Resurrection about which there is no doubt. And who is truer in statement than Allāh?*" (*an-Nisa'*, 4:87)

It is said that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was appointed by his paternal uncle, 'Abd al-Mālik, over Khanasser (the city of Anasartha located in western Syria) in order to become practiced in the tasks of leadership at an early age.[2] Alternatively, some believe it was 'Umar's cousin, Sulayman bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who appointed him over Khanasser. With his uncle's death, 'Umar was deeply saddened by his loss and so he wrote to his uncle's other son, Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, saying: "O Maslamah! I attended your father's burial and my eyes had to bear the sight of his grave. His banner has been left to the affair of Allāh. I was dismayed and struck with terror, which is why I vowed to Allāh that if I were to assume power, I would not do as he did; I will make sure of that!"[3]

His Governorship of al-Madīnah:

In the month of *Rabī' al-Awwal* (the third Islāmic calendar

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(1) *Athār al-Hayāt al-Siyāsiyyah* [The Impact of Political Life], p. 159.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Nizām* al-Ḥakm of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/93).

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 10.

month) of 87 AD, Caliph al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik appointed 'Umar over the province of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, and later extended his office to include Ta'if in 91 AH, thereby making him the governor of the entire Hijaz region. Before taking over, 'Umar laid down three conditions for assuming office, which were: 1) to deal with the people with truth and justice without oppressing anyone or depriving anyone of their rights to the *Bayt al-Mal* (Public Treasury). In keeping with this, any money obtained by the Caliph therefrom would be declared; (2) He would be permitted to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage at the beginning of the year, as he had not already done so; and (3) He would be permitted to make donations to the people of al-Madīnah . Accordingly, al-Walīd complied with these conditions and so 'Umar gladly began to administer al-Madīnah to the extreme delight of the people.(1)

The Shūra (Consultation) Council of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: A Committee of the Ten Jurists of al-Madīnah:

Immediately on arrival in al-Madīnah, 'Umar formed an advisory council of ten eminent jurists and notables of the holy city, unlike the other autocratic governors. When the people turned up to greet the new Caliph and pray behind him, he summoned the ten *Fuqaha'* (jurists), namely, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, 'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah, Abu Bakr bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin al-Ḥārith bin Hishām, Abū Bakr

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/63); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, pp. 41-2.

bin Sulaymān bin Abī Khaythamah, Sulaymān bin Yasār, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad, Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Āmir bin Rabī'ah and Khārijah bin Zayd bin Thābit.

They came to him, entered his place, and sat down. He praised Allāh all the due praise and said: I have called you for a matter that will help you earn reward and also enable you to be supporters of the truth. I shall not decide on a matter unless I take your opinion into consideration. If you see someone violating the boundaries, or if you hear of any injustice on the part of my workers, I ask you by the Majestic, Allāh, to inform me about that." He also said: "Rulers usually appoint people to watch over their subjects. I appoint you a watcher over me and my behaviour. If you find me at fault in a word or action, guide me and stop me from doing it."[1] This short statement was the constitution and the straightforward methodology that he put in place for his rule.

It was a well-known fact that 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had assembled a council to deal with the affairs that were about to ensue and thereby saw the need for *Shūra* (consultation) in that regard. As for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, he was the great grandson of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb who also created a council and in doing so endorsed its authority in two respects:

1) Its members were bearers of the truth in issuing opinions and that he would not take any action without first

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classifications] (5/257); *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar* [An Encyclopedia of 'Umar's Jurisprudence] by Qalji, p. 548.

consulting them. In doing so, the *Amīr* (Commander) passed on his function to the council that came to be known as "the Council of Ten."

2) He made them inspectors of deeds and watchers over behaviour such that should one of them witness some misconduct or come to know of it, it was then their duty to inform him, or else their silence would be left to Allah. Here, we notice that this course of action consisted on two factors: 1) That the *Amīr,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, did not assign some form of compensation or wage to the Council of Ten, since they were people to whom a tender was due and because they were *Fuqahā'* (jurists). He therefore did not commission to his aid anyone who was stubborn and obstinate in nature.

3) Had 'Umar supposed that the absence of one of the council members was an excuse for not administering to matters, he would have stipulated that all members had to be present; however, he did not do this, which is why he said "or the opinions of those present."(1) In actual reality, this council was consulted on every issue without exception.(2) This infers the importance of the devout scholars and their high standing, given that he loved to have them near to him and at hand to take counsel with in relation to matters affecting his subjects. Similarly, it is the

(1) *Niẓām* al-Ḥakm *fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and Islāmic History] (1/561-2).

(2) *Niẓām* al-Ḥakm *fil-Islām bayna an-Naẓariyyah wa at-Taṭbīq* [The System of Government in Islām between Theory and Practice], p. 391.

duty of the scholars to surround those executing decisions for the benefit of attaining as much good as possible and diminishing corruption wherever possible. For this reason, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not completely restrict taking counsel with only them; on the contrary, he would seek advice from other scholars in al-Madīnah, such as 'Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, az-Zuhri and so on. In fact, he would not give a verdict on a case without asking Sa'īd about it first.

'Umar made his high esteem and respect for the scholars apparent. It so happened that he once sent a messenger to Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib to enquire about an issue, while Sa'īd would never visit any of the governors or *Caliphs*, but the messenger made a mistake by saying to him: "The Leader summons you", upon which Sa'īd put on his sandals and paid him a visit. However, when 'Umar saw him, he said: "I urge you, O Abū Muḥammad, to return to your council and our messenger will come to seek your resolve there. We did not send him to summon you; he made a mistake. We only wanted to ask you about a matter."[1]

During his short time as the Governor of al-Madīnah, he repaired and extended the Prophet's Mosque (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the orders of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik to make it two-hundred by two-hundred *Dhirā'* [cubits; units of measure], as well

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 23.

as embellishing it also in accordance with al-Walīd's instructions. However, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz personally despised the beautification of *Masajid* (mosques) but he was compelled to comply with the Commander's orders since he was his superior and even though he was not content with doing it, he considered his serving as Governor to be of greater interest in other respects.

During his governorship of al-Madīnah in 91 AH, the Caliph, al-Walīd, embarked on the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage and he was met by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz with the best of receptions. It was during this visit to al-Madīnah that al-Walīd witnessed with his own eyes the magnificent advancements that had been accomplished by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in the holy city.[1]

The Unfortunate Incident of 'Umar's Governorship:

In his biography, the scholars say: "Khubayb bin 'Abdullah bin az-Zubayr reported that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Thirty men will arrive at the *Banū* Abī al-'Āṣ (tribe)[2] and seize the servants of Allah and the wealth of Allah's State."[3] However, this was

(1) *Mawsū'ah Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [An Encyclopaedia of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Jurisprudence], p.20.

(2) Abī al-Ās: i.e. the tribe of al-'Ās belonging to the Umayyad tribe as the great, great, great grandfather of both al-Walīd and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.

(3) *Niẓām al-Ḥakm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and Islāmic Hisory] (1/561-2).

a weak narration and so al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik sent word to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz – his Governor of al-Madīnah – commanding him to flog Khubayb one hundred lashes and imprison him. Accordingly, 'Umar flogged him and then poured a cold vessel of water over him and made him stand outside on a cold evening, which caused him to catch pneumonia and die. 'Umar released Khubayb from prison when his suffering became severe and 'Umar began to deeply regret what he had done to the point the he felt extremely troubled by his death.

Muṣ'ab bin 'Abdullah narrated on the authority of Muṣ'ab bin 'Uthmān that they moved Khubayb to the house of 'Umar bin Muṣ'ab bin az-Zubayr on az-Zubayr's patch of land and gathered around him until he died. As they were sitting there, al-Majishūn turned up and sought permission to enter as Khubayb was lying there in his *thawb* (long dress-like garment worn by men). Al-Majishūn was an official of al-Madīnah under 'Umar's administration and so 'Abdullah bin 'Urwah said: "Let him in." Upon entering al-Majishūn said: "If your friend is in doubt about his death, reveal it to him", and so they told him he was going to die. He then looked at al-Majishūn who turned around and left. Al-Majishūn said: "After that I went to Marwān's house where I tapped on the door and entered to find 'Umar who was standing and sitting in such a way he looked like a woman suffering from labour pains. He then said to me: "How did you get on?" I replied: "The man died." At that point he fell to the ground in a state of panic and every time he lifted his head he uttered the words: "To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return!" Following

that incident, 'Umar resigned from his post in al-Madīnah and refrained from governorship altogether. From then onwards, whenever it was said to him: "You have done such and such a thing, so rejoice at it", he would say: "What about Khubayb?"[1] He did not stop remembering or picturing this incident in his mind to the point of death.[2]

Proof of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's righteousness exhibited during his time as Governor of al-Madīnah can be seen in many instances, but just one example lies in what Abū 'Umar, the slave of Asmā' bint Abī Bakr, related when he said: "I went to his gathering in which he prayed *Fajr* (Dawn Prayer) and the *Muṣ-ḥaf* (Arabic manuscript of the Qur'ān) was on his lap while tears were flowing down his beard."[3] Ibn Abī az-Zinād narrated from his father: "When 'Umar wanted to give during his time as the leader of al-Madīnah, he would say: 'Fulfill a household of its needs.'"[4]

The Lesson of Mazāḥim *for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:*

'Umar imprisoned a man in al-Madīnah and it happened that the man had served more time than he deserved and so 'Umar went to speak to him regarding his release, saying: "I am not the one getting out, yet I am more cautious about the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 43-4.

(2) *Ibid*, p.42.

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Ibid; Athār al-Wāridah* [The Cited Stories] (66/1).

sentence having overrun." Enraged, the man said: "O 'Umar! I warn you of a night that will give rise to the Resurrection and whose morning will establish the Hour! O 'Umar! I begged that I might forget what I heard of your prestige: the Commander, the Commander, the Commander!" 'Umar said: "The first time that this was ever brought to my attention was with the Mazāḥim affair and, by Allāh, when he said that to me it was as if he lifted a cover from my face."(1) This story illustrates to us the importance of righteousness, integrity and sincerity that remind one of Allah in times of negligence.

The Ordeal between 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and al-Ḥajjāj *bin Yūsuf during al-Walīd's Caliphate:*

Ibn al-Jawzī mentions that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had resigned from al-Madīnah for the aforementioned reasons, however, others have stated that he was in fact dismissed from his post. These accounts assert that in the year 92 AH, Caliph al-Walīd officially entrusted the *Ḥajj* (Major Pilgrimage) banner to al-Ḥajjaj bin Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī to hold the capacity of leader of the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage. Once 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz learned of this, he instantly wrote to the Caliph urging him to instruct al-Ḥajjāj to bypass al-Madīnah, given that 'Umar loathed al-Ḥajjāj and could not stand the sight of him ever since al-Ḥajjāj had wronged him. Accordingly, al-Walīd complied with his request and therefore wrote to al-Ḥajjāj:

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 140.

"Verily, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to me to request that you take a detour and avoid seeing him. Since it is not upon you to visit someone who hates you, stay away from al-Madīnah."[1]

When 'Umar was Governor of al-Madīnah, he had written to al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik to inform him of the complaints he had received concerning the harsh, oppressive and unbearable conditions of the people of 'Irāq at the hands of the tyrant al-Ḥajjāj. In addition, many people emigrated from al-Madīnah from 'Irāq seeking refuge from their harsh governor, which angered al-Ḥajjāj who consequently retaliated against 'Umar by pressing al-Walīd to remove 'Umar. Al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Walīd: "It had become apparent that the people of 'Irāq and Thaqāf are fleeing from 'Irāq and seeking refuge in al-Madīnah and Makkah." Therein al-Ḥajjāj further advised him to appoint 'Uthmān bin Ḥabbān and Khālid bin 'Abdullah instead. To the dismay of 'Umar bin 'Abd al'Azīz, al-Walīd bowed to the pressure and he was dismissed.[2] Al-Walīd's political inclinations towards the strict regime of al-Ḥajjaj who exhibited a lot of control over the provinces he governed were apparent, as unfortunately usually is the case to ensure the stability of a vast state. The conflicting views of 'Umar and al-Ḥajjāj were so, although it later came to light that adopting 'Umar's advice as opposed that of al-Ḥajjāj would have been more favourable following 'Umar's ascent to the Caliphate and his implementation of what he had advocated in the first

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Hakm, p. 24.

(2) *Tārīkh at-*Ṭabarī [Tabari's History] (7/383).

place.[1]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Return to Damascus:

Crying and in the company of his attendant, Mazāḥim, 'Umar left al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, upon which he turned to Mazāḥim and said: "O Mazāḥim! I fear that we are being banished from al-Madīnah."[2] By this, 'Umar was alluding to the statement of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "Al-Madīnah is like the blacksmith's furnace. It removes impurities and purifies the good. The Hour will not be established until all evil is expelled from al-Madīnah like a blacksmith removes impurities from iron."[3] Al-Mazāḥim said: "When 'Umar left al-Madīnah, I looked up at the sky and the moon was in the phase of *Dabrān* (when the star between Pleiades and Orion follows Pleiades); it was as if it were pessimistic about what was happening. However, I hated the thought of saying that to 'Umar so instead I said: 'Have you seen how perfect the moon is tonight?!" 'Umar replied: "O Mazāḥim! It is as if you wanted to show me that the moon is in the phase of *Dabrān.* O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, the One, the Subduer."[4] 'Umar continued to embark on his journey until he reached Swaydā', a city in Syria, where

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(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 165.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 24

(3) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Ḥajj:* [The Book of Hajj]: "al-Madīnah expels all evil."

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 27.

he had a house and farm. He decided to remain there for some time while he observed the situation from a distance, to conclude later that the welfare of the Muslims required his being stationed in Damascus in proximity to the Caliph.(1) Due to the fact that 'Umar was not in complete agreement with al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, his establishment in Damascus was not free from problems, particularly since al-Walīd executed his rule through the use of powerful and staunch governors who were only interested in subjugating the people through force, which was naturally accompanied by great injustice. 'Umar, on the other hand, believed that the administration of justice between people rested on the stability of the sovereign and their consultation with one another under the command of authority. He would say (may Allāh have mercy on him): "Al-Walīd is in the Shām (the Levant), al-Ḥajjāj is in 'Irāq, Muḥammad bin Yūsuf, al-Ḥajjāj's brother, is in the Yemen, 'Uthmān bin Ḥayyān is in the Ḥijāz and Qurrah bin Shurayk is in Egypt. By Allāh, the earth had become filled with injustice!"(2)

'Umar's Advice to al-Walīd to Restrain the Killing Power of His Officials:

'Umar took various courses of action to rectify the situation, one of which was to write to al-Walid advising him to put an end to the killing carried out by his officials. Initially, his appeal

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/683).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, p. 146; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 162.

to al-Walīd was somewhat successful when the latter agreed to issue a resolution prohibiting any governor from killing. Ibn al-Ḥakm mentions that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz entered upon al-Walīd and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful). I have some advice for you. Therefore, if you are not without reason or the ability to understand then you will embrace it." Al-Walīd said: "What prevents you from telling me now?" However, after withdrawing for a number of days, al-Walīd: "O boy! Who is at the door?" The boy replied: "Some people and one of them is 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. So al-Walīd told him to let him in, which point 'Umar entered upon him and al-Walīd said: "Your advice, O Abū Ḥafṣ?" 'Umar began: "Certainly, after *Shirk* (Polytheism; associating partners in worship with Allah) there is no greater sin in the Sight of Allāh than the spilling of blood, yet your officials are killers who record down that the sin of the murdered person was such and such. Indeed, you are responsible for this and will be held to account for it; therefore, write to them commanding them to not kill a single person but to record their sins and then to give testimony to them. This way, your order will allow your affairs to become clear to you." As a result, al-Walīd said: "May Allāh bless you, O Abū Ḥafṣ, and forbid your misfortune. It is incumbent upon me to write to them."

In keeping with his word, al-Walīd wrote to all officials of the major provinces, not leaving out any of them including al-Ḥajjāj, but al-Ḥajjāj became disturbed and troubled by this, particularly since he assumed it was personal and that al-Walīd had only written to him. He consequently wrote back

to al-Walīd, asking: "Where did this come from? Who advised the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* of such a thing?" Al-Walīd therefore told him that it was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, to which al-Ḥajjāj remarked: "It impossible for 'Umar to stay out of matters!" He subsequently sent for I'rābī Ḥarūrī from the *Kharijites* (sect of "Dissenters) to whom al-Ḥajjāj said: "What do you say concerning Mu'āwiyāh?" He then grabbed him and said: "What do you say about Yazīd?" After that, he cursed at him and asked: "What do you say concerning 'Abd al-Mālik?" Next, he oppressed him and asked: "What do you say concerning al-Walīd?!" So, I'rābī replied: "I became outraged by them when you were appointed as governor given your well-known enmity and injustice."

Al-Ḥajjāj was silenced by his answer and thereby seized the opportunity to send him to al-Walīd, to whom he wrote: "I am taking precautions with regard to my religion and I am taking care of that which you asked me to take care of. Thus, I have not killed anyone who does not need to be killed, which is why I have sent you some of those who I would have ordinarily killed so that you might deal with the matter at your own discretion." It follows that al-Ḥarūri entered upon al-Walīd who was sitting with some of the notables from the Shām (Levant), among whom was 'Umar. Al-Walīd said to al-Ḥarūri: "What do you have to say about me?" He answered: "You are an insolent tyrant." Al-Walīd continued: "And 'Abd al-Mālik?" He answered: "An arrogant oppressor." "And what do you say concerning Mu'āwiyah?" asked al-Walīd. He answered: "A tyrant." So al-Walīd turned to Ibn ar-Rayyān and ordered

to him to behead him, which he did. Al-Walīd then stood up, went into his house and the people left. At that point, al-Walīd shouted to his servant: "Boy! Go and bring 'Umar back to me." When 'Umar returned, al-Walīd said: "O Abū Ḥafṣ! What do you have to say about this? "Were we right or wrong?" 'Umar answered: "You were not right to kill him, as to have taken a different course of action would have been more guided and correct. You should have imprisoned him until you had sought the counsel of Allāh or his fate had been determined." Al-Walīd remarked: "He insulted me and 'Abd al-Mālik while he is a mere Harūri! Do you consider this permissible? It is not! If you would have imprisoned him then it seems that you would have pardoned him for doing so" and at that point al-Walīd stood up in a fury. Ibn ar-Rayyān then said to 'Umar: "Allah forgives you, Abū Ḥafṣ! I thought the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* called you back so that I could behead you![1] This was in fact the ploy of al-Ḥajjāj to frustrate al-Walīd about adopting 'Umar's opinion that al-Ḥajjāj's killings were immoderate and inappropriate. [2]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's View on Dealing with the Khārijites:

In addition to the aforementioned incident in which al-Ḥajjāj sent al-Ḥarūrī to al-Walīd, some narrations have

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-hakm, pp. 119-121; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 164.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 164.

been related that serve to shed some light on what exactly happened. On the authority of Ibn Shihāb, who was informed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, al-Walīd sent for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and when he arrived, he noticed that al-Walīd was frowning. He said: "So I sat down and there was nobody with him except for Ibn ar-Rayyān who was standing there with his sword. He then said: 'What do you say concerning someone who insults the *Caliphs*? Do you think he should be killed?' However, I remained silent so he scolded me and said: 'What is wrong with you?' Again, I kept quiet and the same happened again, after which I said: 'Do I kill, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?' He answered: 'No, but he insulted the *Caliphs*'. I said: 'And I think he should have abstained'. At that point, he lifted his head, looked at Ibn ar-Rayyān and said: 'He is certainly absent-minded'".

Advising al-Walīd on the Subject of Deposing Sulaymān and Pledging Allegiance to His Son:

One of the last events involving 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to be mentioned during al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's Caliphate is his advising al-Walīd at the time when the latter wanted to renounce Sulaymān's right to the Caliphate and pass the pledge of allegiance after him on to his son, 'Abd al-'Azīz. However, 'Umar put a decisive end to that and he did not comply with al-Walīd's orders in this instance but instead said to him: "O *Amir al-Mu'minīn*! If we pledge allegiance to both of you in a single covenant, then how can we renounce him and

leave you?" Al-Walīd was outraged by 'Umar's comments and it is said that he attempted to deal with him harshly as a means of getting him to agree to do what he wanted. It has been stated that he locked him in a room and sealed the door shut until Umm al-Banīn, 'Umar's sister and the wife of al-Walīd, requested to enter. As a result, the door was opened after three (days or weeks) by which time 'Umar's face had become withdrawn and his neck had become bent.[1]

Umar during the Caliphate of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik:

It was during Sulaymān's rule that tremendous opportunities opened up for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his impact became manifest in various forms. By the time of Sulaymān's accession to the Caliphate, 'Umar had become a close intimate of Sulaymān, who in turn opened up many opportunities for 'Umar, saying: "O Abū Ḥafṣ! We have turned out exactly as you saw we would. This knowledge cannot be measured and you did not consider something in the general interest and let it pass." Thus, he made 'Umar an advisor and minister within his administration to remain by his side whether at home or away. In fact, Sulaymān was of the opinion that he needed 'Umar throughout his childhood and adulthood, as he would say: "If this man is ever absent from me I would never find anyone to instruct me with legal knowledge."[2] On another occasion, he said: "O Abū Ḥafṣ! I was never filled with distress or troubled about something

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/148-9); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 167.
(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1/598).

that you had not warned me about in advance."[1]

The Reasons For Sulaymān's Closeness to 'Umar:

Sulaymān's insistence on making available a vast array of opportunities before 'Umar, in my opinion, was motivated by the following reasons:

- Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's Personality: He was not like his self-conceited brother, al-Wālid, who relied on his own opinion and bowed to the pressure of some of his governors. Rather, Sulaymān was the opposite of him such that he did not rely on his own opinion and he was not influenced by others.
- Sulaymān's satisfaction and contentment with 'Umar's sound opinions and views.
- 'Umar's stance during al-Walīd's endeavors to depose Sulaymān, for which Sulaymān felt indebted to 'Umar. This was suggested by adh-Dhahabī, once 'Umar's stance had become apparent, who said: "Because of that, Sulaymān was grateful to 'Umar and nominated him as his successor to the Caliphate."[2]
- 'Umar's influence on Sulaymān in issuing reformative

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 28; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 168.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/149).

resolutions: 'Umar was instrumental in a number of important decisions made by Sulaymān, the most significant of which were:

- The dismissal of al-Ḥajjāj's governors and certain other governors, such as the Governor of Makkah, Khālid al-Qasrī, and the Governor of al-Madīnah, 'Uthmān bin Ḥayyān;[1]
- The establishment of prayer on time; Ibn 'Asākir reports on the authority of Sa' īd bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik was would habitually delay the *Ẓuhr* (Midday) and *'Aṣr* (Afternoon) prayers. Therefore, upon assuming power, Sulaymān wrote to the people – in accordance with 'Umar's advice – stating that prayer had been dead and so they should revive it.[2] There were many other instances of 'Umar's great influence on Sulaymān, which have been summarised by aẓ-Ẓahrī in his statement: "In relation to all matters of great importance, he would listen to what 'Umar had to say."[3]

His Contestation with Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik over the Latter's Enactment of His Father's Deed:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-Mālik spoke to Sulaymān on the subject

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 169.

(2) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] extracted from *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 170.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/125).

of the inheritance of some of 'Abd al-'Azīz's daughters from the *Banī* 'Abd al-Mālik (tribe) and in the course of their dispute, Sulaymān said to him: "If 'Abd al-Mālik wrote that in a deed then he prevented it from them", which caused 'Umar to walk out. Afterwards, Sulaymān summoned him back as he suspected that 'Umar had denounced him for what he had said concerning 'Abd al-'Azīz's position, upon which Sulaymān shouted to his servant: "O boy! Bring me 'Abd al-Mālik's deed." 'Umar therefore said to him: "*Abū al-Muṣḥaf* (Father of the Qur'ānic Manuscript), you called, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful)?" However, Ayyūb bin Sulaymān remarked: "One of you speaks words that could bring about his beheading!" 'Umar replied: "If I conveyed the matter to you, the ramifications for the Muslims would be greater than my mentioning it." At that point, Sulaymān scolded Ayyūb, but 'Umar interrupted and said: "If he was ignorant about the matter then let us not dwell on it."(1) Typical of his character, this incident illustrates just one example of the courageous stances taken by 'Umar in adherence to the truth, which ultimately was a merit to him when Sulaymān deemed his father's deed legally binding and non-amendable. On this occasion, 'Umar pointed out that the only book for which it is neither permissible to detract from nor make any changes to is the Book of Allāh. Tyrants subject victims by aggrandizing the issue of their fathers and grandfathers who bequeathed that temporal glory to their children to the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 31.

extent that they then consider their judgments effectively law-binding, irrespective of their position under Islāmic Law or whether they are in violation of it. Sulaymān's attitude towards his son who threatened 'Abd al-'Azīz for speaking the truth substantiates what was attributed to Sulaymān as far as his readiness to accept the truth when it was presented to him is concerned.(1)

His Contestation with Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik over Spending:

Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik made a trip to al-Mādinah during which he gave out a vast amount of money. He later asked 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "What do think of what we just did, O Abū Ḥafṣ?" He replied: "I witnessed you enhance the wealth of the rich and abandoned the poor in their poverty."(2) This was a perfect assessment made by 'Umar of Sulaymān's actions, since Sulaymān's ignorance of the exactitudes of Islāmic rulings led him to assume that spending all that money on his subjects was a good deed, whereas 'Umar enlightened him to the fact that he had made an error by spending it only the undeserving and depriving the deserving. 'Umar therefore demonstrated the definitive difference between praiseworthy generosity and spending for his own merit.

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15/30-1).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 131.

'Umar's Urging Sulaymān to Restore the Rights of the Aggrieved:

Sulaymān embarked on a journey to the desert in the company of 'Umar and while they were on their way, a lightning and thundercloud cast over them that caused Sulaymān to become extremely frightened. As a result, 'Umar said: "Verily, this is a blessed sound. Therefore what would you be like at the sound of punishment?" Sulaymān, however, responded: "Take this one hundred thousand *Dirhams* and give it away in charity." So 'Umar replied: "Or even better than that, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?" He asked: "And what is that?" He said: "A nation has sent you complaints that you have not attended to", and so Sulaymān sat down to restore them their rights.[1] It is evident from this that 'Umar had clear legal insight with respect to the arrangement of priorities whereby redressing grievances was put before giving out charity.

"I see a world devouring one another..."

At the time when he was *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* Sulaymān went out to see his military base with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in his company. The military base was comprised of horses, camels, asses, armour, possessions and men, which brought Sulaymān to ask 'Umar: "What do you say about

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 33; *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 170.

this, O 'Umar?" He answered: "I see a world devouring one another and you are responsible for it all." As they drew near to the army, a crow took up a morsel of food from Sulaymān's canopy, flew away with it and began to croak. Sulaymān said: "What do you say to that, O 'Umar?" He answered: "I do not know." So he said: "What do you reckon he is saying?" 'Umar replied: "It is as if he saying: 'Where did you come from? And where are you going with it?'" Sulaymān then said to him: "Does that not amaze you?" He replied: "What amazes me is someone who acknowledges Allāh yet disobeys Him and someone who acknowledges the *Shayṭān* (Satan) yet obeys him."(1)

"These will be your adversaries on the Day of Judgment":

When Sulaymān and 'Umar stopped in 'Arafat, Sulaymān was pleased by the vast numbers of people there, so 'Umar said to him: "These are your subjects today and you will be held responsible for them tomorrow." Another narration of this account reads: "They will be your adversaries on the Day of Judgment", which made Sulaymān cry and say: "I seek help from Allāh."(2)

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/685).

(2) *Ibid.*

Zayd bin Al-Ḥasan *bin 'Alī and Sulaymān:*

Zayd bin Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī had succumb to al-Walīd on the issue of deposing Sulaymān out of fear of al-Walīd, following which he wrote to al-Walīd confirming his acceptance from al-Madīnah. Once Sulaymān had assumed the seat of power in succession, he found Zayd's letter and, immediately, he sent word to his Governor of al-Madīnah to question Zayd about it to see whether he acknowledged or denied Sulaymān in oath before the *minbar* (pulpit) of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). However, even after word had been sent to Sulaymān regarding his acknowledgment of his Caliphate, Sulaymān ordered the Governor of al-Madīnah to flog him one hundred lashes and make him walk barefoot. In response to this, 'Umar imprisoned the messenger and said: "You are not leaving until I have spoken to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* concerning Zayd bin Al-Hasan bin 'Alī who has bettered himself since writing this letter." The messenger remained where he was, while in the meantime Sulaymān had fallen ill, but 'Umar said to the Messenger: "You will not be getting out, as Sulaymān is sick." Hence, when Sulaymān died and 'Umar learned of his death, he ordered for the letter to be brought to him and he tore it up."[(1)]

'Umar remained a close confidante of Sulaymān throughout the period of his Caliphate, delivering him advice

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 104.

and sharing his responsibility.[1] According to Dr. Yūsuf al-'Ashī, the starting point of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policies was with the commencement of Sulaymān's Caliphate on the basis that although Sulaymān would at times digress from his policies, such as when adopting his own course of action unapproved by 'Umar, nevertheless, 'Umar was undoubtedly a key player throughout Sulaymān's Caliphate. Notably, 'Umar's policies were unchangeable irrespective of whether he was in Damascus or al-Madīnah, despite the fact that he had the capacity to do more in Damascus than in al-Madīnah. Important to him was the issue of eradicating inequity,[2] oppression and tyranny and it was because of his anxiousness to do so that his strategies were executed in a gradual and moderate manner and his legal understanding of enjoining the good and prohibiting the evil, such as restoring the rights of the wronged and prohibiting it. When the mantle of the Caliphate would fall upon 'Umar, he further enhanced the enforcement of justice and the eradication of inequity on account of the power that had become available to him.

Thus, 'Umar advised his paternal uncle, 'Abd al-Mālik, and reminded of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) in relation to his authority and injustice. Even during al-Walīd's Caliphate, he did not remain aloof but it was with the ascent of Sulaymān to the Caliphate that 'Umar began to take the relevant steps and he was afforded opportunities. Hence, it is not plausible

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(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 173.

(2) *Dawlat a-Umawiyyah* [The Umayyad State] by Yūsif al-'Ashī, p. 254.

to say that 'Umar underwent change on a personal level but that the change was in the appointment of the state to serve the *Shar'īah* (Islāmic Law) in all aspects of life, even if that was at the expense of the ruling family that had become extravagant in its allowances and powers. Anxious to promote the welfare of the people, he restored the rights of the people by returning money to the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) or to its rightful owners.

The Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

One of the advantages of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's acceptance of the advice of the *Faqīh* (jurist) and scholar, Rajā' bin Ḥaywah al-Kundī, was his suggestion to Sulaymān on his deathbed to appoint 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as his successor, since writing his will meant the *Shayṭān* (Satan) had no share in it.(1) Sulaymān died in the year 99 AH, on which occasion 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz offered the prayer at his funeral. Engraved on his ring were the words: [I sincerely believe in Allāh].(2) There are multiple accounts relating Sulaymān's appointment of 'Umar as his successor, some of which I previously cited in the chapter on Sulymān's Caliphate. Other narrations include those mentioned by Ibn Sa'ad in his *Tabaqāt* [The Classes] on the authority of Suhayl bin Abī Suhayl who said: "I heard Rajā' bin Ḥaywah say: 'On the day of *Jumu'ah* (Friday; congregational prayer), Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik was wearing green silk robes and as he looked in mirror, he said: 'By Allāh! I am a young king.' He then left for prayer, led the people in the Friday congregation and he did not return except that he had fallen ill.

When he later burdened his son, Ayyūb, who was just a

(1) *'Aṣr ad-Dawlatayn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah* [The Age of the Umayyad and Abbasid States] by as-salābī, p. 37.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/111-2).

boy at the time, with writing a book on his Caliphate, I said: 'What are you doing, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*? Among the things that can preserve the Caliph in his grave is the appointment of a righteous successor'. Sulaymān said: 'I will seek Allāh's counsel on the book. Wait and see. I have not decided upon it yet'. After one or two days, however, he had torn up the book and upon summoning me, he said: 'What do you think of Dāwūd bin Sulaymān?' I answered: 'He is away in Constantinople and you do not know if he is alive or dead'. He said: 'O Rajā', who do you see fit?' So I said: 'It is your choice, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn.* I want to see who you mention'. He then said: 'What do you think of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz?' I replied: 'I know, by Allāh, that he is a pious, good Muslim'. So he said: 'He was certainly that while he was governor. He is not the first in line considering 'Abd al-Mālik's sons and will certainly never leave him to be appointed over them unless I make one of them his successor after him. Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik is absent this season, so I will make him his successor. This should appease 'Umar and keep the others satisfied'. I said: 'It is your choice'. He then wrote down: [In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful. This is a deed from the servant of Allāh, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Verily, I have handed over the Caliphate to him after me, and after him, to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Therefore, hear and obey him, fear Allāh and do not differ over it lest it make you avaricious'. He then sealed the deed and sent Ka'ab bin Ḥāmid, Chief of Police, to the members of his family who he had told to gather, which

they did.

Next, he sent the letter with me after giving me instructions to inform them that it was his deed, to pass it on to all of them and then to take their pledge of allegiance to the one he appointed therein. Accordingly, I went to them and when I told them that it was the deed of Sulaymān, they automatically said: 'We hear and we obey whoever is in it. May we enter and give our greetings to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?' I answered in the affirmative and they entered upon Sulaymān who said to them: 'This deed – and pointed to it for them to look at in my hands – is my covenant, so hear, obey and pledge allegiance to whoever is named therein. He then left while the sealed deed was in my hand.

Once the people had dispersed, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz approached me and said: 'O Abī al-Miqdām! If Sulaymān has any reverence and respect for me, or wished to put my mind at ease, as I fear that he might have attached this affair to me in some way, I implore by Allāh and my respect and esteem that you inform me if that is the case, so that I can ask him to pardon me of it now before a situation emerges in which I will have no power to do so, as I have no power on the Hour'. However, I said: 'No, by Allāh, not even a single letter'. 'Umar then angrily left. Soon afterwards, I was met by Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who said: 'O Rajā'! Verily, I have a long-standing respect and love for you; therefore, will you not inform me of this affair? Even if you told me and then went to speak to someone else about it, they would not have heard

anything from me, so it will not make a difference anyway. Tell me and, by Allāh, I will never mention your name!' However, I refused and said: 'No, by Allāh, I will not inform you of so much as a single letter of that which was revealed to me in secret', at which point, Hishām walked away, hitting one hand with the other and saying: 'Apart from me, who else could it be? Have you gone outside of the *Banī* 'Abd al-Mālik (tribe)?! By Allāh, I am the outcast of *Banī* 'Abd al-Mālik'.

I entered upon Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik as he was dying and when I saw that he was suffering the agony of death, I turned him towards the *Qiblah* (direction of the *Ka'abah* in Makkah) and once he had gained consciousness, he uttered to me: 'That time hasn't come yet, O Rajā''. I repeated this two times until on the third time, he said: 'It is now, O Rajā', if you want to do it. I declare that there is only One God and that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger', and straight after that he died. Once I had closed his eyelids, covered him with green velvet and locked the door, I sent a messenger to his wife requesting her to come and see him. She returned the message: 'How was he when he woke this morning?' I told the messenger: 'Sleeping and covered'. He then looked at him covered in green velvet and returned to tell her what I had said, however, she understood that to mean that he was sleeping. I subsequently entrusted someone to sit by the door and informed him that under no circumstances should anyone be allowed in to see the Caliph.

At that point, I left and sent a message to Ka'ab bin Ḥāmid

al-'Unsī to gather together the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and so they convened in the Dābiq *masjid* (mosque). Upon addressing them, I said: 'Pledge your allegiance'. They retorted: 'We pledged our allegiance once before and you want us to do it again?!' I answered: 'This is the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Pledge your allegiance as he commanded you to do to whoever is named herein'. At that point, they gave their pledges one by one and now that Sulaymān had died, I realised that I would have to arbitrate the matter and so I said: 'Arise for your companion who has just died'. They uttered the words: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return', after which I began to read out the letter. When I reached the part that mentioned 'Umar's name, Hishām exclaimed: 'We will never pledge allegiance to him!' I said: 'I will, by Allāh, have you beheaded! Stand up and pay homage', and so, dragging his feet, he stood up. I then escorted 'Umar onto the *Minbar* (pulpit) where I sat him down while 'Umar was visibly reluctant. Hishām was, too, unaccepting of the fact that 'Umar's name had been written down and so when Hishām reached 'Umar, he said: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return. It is absurd that you should be endowed with this affair (the Caliphate) over the sons of 'Abd al-Mālik!' 'Umar humbly said: 'Yes, to Allāh we belong and to him we shall return. I hate that it has fallen on me'."[1]

Concerning Rajā' bin Ḥaywah's distinct position, Abū Al-Ḥasan an-Nadwī said: "Rajā' accomplished a feat that cannot be forgotten by Islām. I do not know of any confidante of kings

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Tabarī's History] (7/445); *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/335-8).

and their men whose eminence proved to be as revered as and of more benefit than that of Rajā' bin Ḥaywah. Likewise, nobody seized opportunities like him and by doing so he rendered a great service to Islām."[1] Thus, may Allāh bestow His mercy on Rajā' who presented an exemplary model for those scholars who sit in the intimate circles of kings in showing them how they can honour Islām, remind the *Caliphs* of Allāh and take the opportunity to serve the Religion of Allāh.

'Umar's Approach to Administering the State According to His First Sermon:

Having now officially assumed the seat of the Caliphate, 'Umar ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) in what would be his first encounter with the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful). He said: "O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the Caliphate against my own will and without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect anyone whom you like." But the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: "We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair." At this juncture, 'Umar sensed that he was not going to be able to evade bearing the responsibility of the Caliphate, and so he decided to go on with determining his method and approach in dealing with the politics of the Muslim *Ummah,*[2] stating:

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(1) *Rijāl al-Fikr wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thinking and Preaching] by an-Nadwī (1/40).

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and

"To proceed: Verily, there is no prophet to come after your Prophet, and no book after the Book that was revealed to him; indeed, that is what Allāh resolved until the Day of Resurrection. I am not here as a judge but as an executor, neither am I an innovator but rather a follower, in which case nobody is to obey me should I act in disobedience to Allāh. I am not better than you, although a man from amongst you, by the decree of Allāh, has burdened me with a heavier burden than yours.

O people! Whoever wants to associate with us, he may do so in five things otherwise let him not come near us: He raises the need of whoever is incapable of raising it to us himself; he helps us to do good through his efforts; he acts in accordance with the good that we lead him to; he does not cheat anyone in our community; and he does not get involved in what does not concern him. I advise you to fear Allāh before anything and everything else, as besides this there is nothing else. Know your *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), as Allāh, the Beneficent, will satisfy the worldly affairs of the one who works towards it. Improve your inner-selves and Allāh will better you outwardly. Be increasingly mindful of death and prepare for it before it seizes it, as that will be the destroyer of you. This *Ummah* is neither divided over its Lord, the Majestic, nor its Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), nor its Book, while it does differ on the *Dīnār* and *Dirham* (units of currency; money). By Allāh, I will not give to anyone who is untrue and I will not deprive anyone who is true", and at that

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his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Faysal, p. 102.

point he raised his voice so the people could hear him clearly, then he continued: "O people! As for he who obeys Allāh, his obedience is a duty but for the one who disobeys Allāh, he has no obedience. Obey me in obedience to Allāh but should I disobey Allāh, you must not obey me. If those around you in the major cities and provinces obey as you obey, then I am your leader, but if they are against it and seek to revolt, then I am not a leader."(1) With that closing statement, he descended the *minbar* (pulpit).

Thus, the Caliphate was assigned to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on that day, specifically, Friday, fifteen days before the close of the Islāmic month of *Ṣafar* in 99 AH.(2) It is evident from his political sermon that 'Umar and his followers decided on the following rule:

- To adhere to the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) and that he was not prepared to listen to any dispute on the issue of Islāmic Law and the Religion on the grounds that he was the leading executor, and Islāmic Law is executed through the authorization of what Allāh has made lawful and the prohibition of what Allāh has made unlawful, along with his rejection of *Bid'ah* (innovation) and fabricated opinions.

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(1) See "Some of the Difference of Opinion" in *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/340); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 35-6; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayḥal, p. 104.

(2) *Al-Bidaāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12/657).

- He limited who he wanted to be connected with and who would work with him from his subordinates in accordance with five criteria:

1) He raises the need of a person incapable of raising it to the Caliph himself, i.e. he made his close associates the connecting link between him and those incapable of reaching him for themselves in order that he might know of the people's needs and address them.

2) He helps us to do good through his efforts, i.e. the relationship between them and him is on the basis assisting the Caliph towards good, and by implication, warning him against evil.

3) It is incumbent on those close to the Caliph to guide him and advise him on the good of the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) and Religion.

4) He forbade anyone who wants to get close to him with the aim of cheating or deceiving him.

5) None of his close associates were to interfere in government matters that do not concern them.

In fact, 'Umar was all too familiar with the influence of the ruler's entourage and close associates on the ruler and subordinates, as well as the manner of rule. This is why he chose to make an impact on the people from the onset, by warning them to leave the ruling to him as he saw fit concerning the Law of Allāh, without completely excluding

them given that he permitted those close associates to direct him towards good, assist him and to transmit to him the demands of the needy.[1]

- He warned the people of the worldly consequences if they behaved wrongly, he appealed to them to better their inner-selves and he warned them to draw lessons from death before it is too late.
- He made a vow to not give to anyone who is untrue and to not withhold from anyone who is true, whereby he made giving to them a right upon him. Those who are right are the ones who obey him in that which he obeys Allāh, however, he allowed them to break their oath of allegiance to him if he wavered from the path of Allāh, the Sublime.

The above constitute the broad statutes of 'Umar's political mandate, which he stipulated during his first encounter with his subordinates and the *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd* (the people of decision and power" i.e. those scholars or political and military leaders who have power and are influential in the decision-making process) in the *Masjid* (mosque) on the day that he received the pledge of allegiance. In this manner, he defined his state in accordance with the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whereby he stressed that he would not allow any of his delegates and officials to

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Faysal, p. 104.

influence him after that. He then summarised the main points of his first speech in a memo which he subsequently sent out to all his officials. This memo served two purposes:

- To point out to his officials what was required of them in terms of personal demeanour, and especially with regards to subjects, which we shall elaborate on in more detail by the will of Allāh;
- To outline their political mandates and determine their mode of dealing with individual subjects from the Muslim community and non-Muslims living under Muslim rule. As we shall come to see, by the permission of Allāh, 'Umar went on to speak about his position as a *Faqīh* (jurist) proficiently knowledgeable in *Uṣūl ad-Dīn* (the Fundamentals of Religion).[1] Here, it is fitting to go on to what 'Umar actually said to his officials vis-à-vis his attitude and approach.

Adherence to the Qur'ān *and Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition):*

One of the most distinct features of 'Umar's political life was his adherence to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* such that he embarked on a campaign to disseminate knowledge amongst his subjects in order that they gain a deeper understanding of the Religion and become more informed of the *Sunnah.* This was triggered by 'Umar's recognition of the importance of the Caliphate, which meant the preservation of the Religion and the politics of

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 106.

the world in accordance with it.[1] From this standpoint, 'Umar considered it both a priority and a duty to educate his subjects on the principles of their Religion so that they would take it upon themselves to act in agreement with them.

He has been reported as having said in one of his sermons: "*Imān* (Faith) includes *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i* (legal laws), *Hudūd* (Allāh's ordinaces between lawful and unlawful things) and *Sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith, and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company."[2] He also said: "Should Allāh cause every *Bid'ah* (innovation in the Religion) to perish by my hands and every *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to live by my hands so that part of my flesh might bring that about until I die, that is easy for Allāh." In another narration, he says: "By Allāh! Were it not for my reviving a *Sunnāh* or pursing a truth, I would not wish to live a breath longer", and it was due to these very reasons that 'Umar took the initiative to administer to this weighty responsibility.

In pursuit of educating the masses and providing them with a greater understanding of the Religion, 'Umar dispatched an impressive number of scholars to the different corners of the

(1) *Al-Aḥkām as-Sulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt ad-Dīniyyah* [The Ordinances of Government] by al-Mawaridi, p. 5.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 60.

vast empire to include major cities and townships. Therein, he instructed his delegates over the regions to press the scholars to spread their knowledge, which can be seen from the letters he wrote to them that state: "Visit the people of knowledge and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) with your soldiers in order that they impart to others what Allāh gave them knowledge of, and they speak in a manner consistent with it in their gatherings."[1] Similarly, he wrote to some of his delegates: "To proceed: Order the scholars to spread knowledge in the *Masajid* (mosques), as the *Sunnah* has definitely perished."[2] Furthermore, he instructed his officials to pay the scholars stipends to facilitate their devoting themselves purely to teaching. He deputed numerous scholars to instruct the people in the ruling of the Religion, including the likes of Yazīd bin Abī Mālik ad-Damashqī and al-Ḥārith bin Yamjad al-Ash'arī who he sent instruct both city people and Bedouins.[3] Adh-Dhahabi documents that 'Umar delegated Yazīd bin Abī Mālik to instruct the *Banī* Namīr (tribe) on matters of Islāmic jurisprudence and to teach them to read. He sent Nāfi', the slave of Ibn 'Umar, to the people of Egypt to teach them the *Sunan* (Prophetic Traditions).[4] He had also sent tens of *Fuqahā'* (jurists) to Africa to instruct its people on matters of Islāmic jurisprudence, which we shall come to in more detail

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(1) *Ibid*, p. 73.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 76.

(3) *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Damashq* [A Concise History of Damascus] (6/175); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 179.

(4) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/438).

by the permission of Allāh.

The roles of these scholars, however, were not merely limited to educating and no more; on the contrary, some of them were vested with authority over the provinces, some were entrusted with the administration of the law and the vast majority, in addition to disseminating knowledge, participated in the fields of *Da'wah* (Islāmic preaching) and *Jihad* (fighting for Allāh's Cause). While these constitute but a few of his reforms, they were in reality among the most distinct qualities of his political regime that served to set him apart from his predecessors. His eagerness to promote a sound religious consciousness and enhance the understanding of Islāmic rulings among the individuals of his state meant that he was instrumental in protecting the minds of the *Ummah* from the frivolous ideas that had detrimental effects on political stability and peace, such as the ideas of the *Kharijites* (sect of "Dissenters) among others.[1]

The Presence of Shūrā (Consultation) within 'Umar's State:

Allāh, the Sublime, says in the Holy Qur'ān: [*And those who answer the Call of their Lord, perform the Ṣalāt (Prescribed Prayers), who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation and who spend of what we have bestowed on*

(1) *Atharal-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 180.

them" (*ash-Shūrā,* 42:38). And He says: "*So overlook (their faults), ask Allāh's forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh; certainly, Allāh loves those who put their trust in Him.*" (*Āl-'Imrān,* 3:159). Undoubtedly, 'Umar showed great concern over the implementation of the principle of *Shūrā* during the course of his Caliphate. Just one of the many things he said on the topic was: "Indeed, advice and debate are gateways of mercy and blessing with which opinions cannot deviate and resolve cannot be lost."(1) One of the first decisions taken by 'Umar upon his appointment over al-Madīnah by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik was to dedicate himself to the application of *Shūra,* which he made a ground rule of his governorship when he summoned al-Madīnah's *Fuqahā'* (jurists) and senior scholars to form a permanent advisory council,(2) as we discussed earlier.

It is only proper for one on whom the enormous responsibility of leading rests to establish *Shūrā* as one of its principles to be applied throughout the entire duration of his office, and more importantly, because it pertains to the mandate of the Muslims. From the onset of his Caliphate, the principle of *Shūrā* was made evident when he said to the people: "O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the Caliphate against my own will and

(1) *Adab ad-Dunyā wa ad-Dīn* [The Ethics of the World and of the Religion (of Islām)] by al-Mawaridi, p. 189

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 283.

without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect anyone whom you like." But the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: "We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair." By declaring this, 'Umar abandoned the principle of hereditary accession that had practiced by most of the 'Umayyad *Caliphs* and replaced them with the principles of *Shūrā* and election. In that way, 'Umar did not oblige those present to choose him and pay homage to him, given that he was worried about the view of the Muslims within the major cities and their consent to it, which is why he said in his first speech following his assumption of the Caliphate: "If those around you in the major cities and provinces obey as you obey, then I am your leader, but if they are against it and seek to revolt, then I am not a leader" and he descended the *Minbar* (pulpit).

Having written to major cities of the Islāmic empire, every one of them offered their vow of allegiance. Among those who wrote them was Yazīd bin al-Muhallab who advocated pledging allegiance to 'Umar once it had become clear to him that there was a Caliphate that had not been pursued and so he called the people to pledge their allegiance, which they did.[1] It is evident that 'Umar not only received the consent of those around him but, the same was true for the Muslims of

(1) *Tārikh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Tabari's History], extracted from: *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 285.

all the cities. From this, we can infer the following regarding 'Umar's position:

- He revealed the nonconformity of most of the Umayyad *Caliphs* with fundamental Islāmic principles in their accession to the Caliphate
- He urged the application of *Shūrā,* in specific reference to his own assumption of the Caliphate
- Applying the principle of *Shūrā* to matters such as succession to the Caliphate makes it fitting to be applied to other similar matters

'Umar would take counsel with the scholars and seek their advice on many matters. He attracted around him a galaxy of talented men, including the likes of Sālim bin 'Abdullah, Muḥammad bin Ka'ab al-Qurṭubī and Rajā' bin Ḥaywah. Addressing them, 'Umar said: "I have burdened with this affair, so advise me on it",(1) and in a similar manner he would also take counsel with men of outstanding intellect.(2) 'Umar had become determined to reform his inner circle once he was appointed to the Caliphate, which he did by means of remaining in the close company of the scholars and righteous and distancing himself from those only interested in worldly enhancement and personal gain. It was not enough for him, may Allāh have mercy on him, to select his inner circle of associates but he

(1) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life Story and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 65.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 285.

went a step further than that by urging and commending them to assess him. Thus, he said to 'Umar bin Muhājir: "If you were to ever see me stray from the truth then put your hands around my throat, shake me and say: 'O 'Umar, what are you doing?!'"(1) It was this very attitude that had an influence on the rectification of his reformative political mandate and its success, in conjunction with the influence of his inner-circle in supporting and encouraging him, keeping him levelheaded and ensuring correctness in taking decisions.(2) Of the many reasons for 'Umar's outstanding success was his closeness to the people of knowledge and righteousness and his contentment with them in sharing the immense responsibility with him. In due course, the outcome of this unison brought about greater good for the Muslims and Islām.

Justice within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz'z State:

Allāh, the Majestic, says: "*Verily, Allāh enjoins justice and doing good*" (*an-Naḥl,* 16:90). He also orders compliance with that which He makes compulsory: "*You who believe! Uphold justice and bear witness to Allāh, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allāh can best take care of both. Refrain from following your own desire, so that you can act justly – if you distort or neglect justice, Allāh is fully aware of what you do.*" (*an-Nisā',* 4: 135).

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], pp. 175-7.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 178.

Justice had two forms: 1) the form that is negative in the sense of preventing injustice and removing it from the oppressed, i.e. preventing the violation of people's rights in connection with themselves, their possessions and their wealth, eradicating the effects of the wrong that has been done to them, restoring their rights to them, punishing the wrongdoer where punishment is necessary;[1] 2) positive justice, which is mainly connected to the State in reference to state officials carrying out the truth in guaranteeing the people's freedom and livelihood to the extent that not a single one of them remains helpless, despondently weak, depravedly poor, or timorously threatened. It is the duty of the ruler in Islām to ensure all of these things.[2] The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, embarked on this enormous task and weighty principle to the fullest and he believed that responsibility and authority corresponded to granting people their rights, yielding to the conditions of their oaths of allegiance and realizing their legitimate interests. In view of that, the Caliph worked for the *Ummah* and it was upon him to attend to their fair demands according to the conditions of the pledge of allegiance.[3]

'Umar loved to gain better insight into the characteristics of a just leader and what he had to undertake in order to

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 222.

(2) *Ibid; Niẓām al-Islāmm* [The System of Islām] by Muḥammad Mubārak. P. 45-6.

(3) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 223.

earn such a praiseworthy, unique and special reputation. He once wrote to Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to write him the description of a just leader and Al-Ḥasan wrote: "The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is like a loving father who works hard for his children when they are young, teaches them when they get older, writes to them while he is alive and puts away for them for after his death. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is like the gracious, honest, merciful mother to her child who she carries reluctantly, bears reluctantly, nurtures as a child, stays up at night with him, soothes and calms him, breastfeeds him for some time, weans him for some time more, expresses joy at his good health and is saddened by his illnesses. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is the guardian of the orphan and the treasury of the poor, fostering the little ones. The just leader, *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is as the heart is to the organs of the body: all are sound when it is sound, and all corrupt when it is corrupt. The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is he who stands between Allāh and His servants, hearkening to Allāh's Words and making them hearken; looking to Allāh and making them look; obedient to Allāh and making them obedient. Therefore, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* act not in what Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious, has given you like a servant whose master has trusted him and given into his care his wealth and hid children, who then squanders his master's wealth and drive his children away, and reduced the family to poverty and scatters their fortune."[1]

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(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 224.

His Policy on Redressing Grievances:

The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* Began with Himself –

Whether in his youth or as adult, 'Umar's eagerness to attend to the needs of every person in the empire and administer to restoring the rights of victims always began through personal example. Ibn Sa'ad narrates: 'When 'Umar would restore the rights of those who had been wronged, he would say: 'I should not start with anyone other than myself'.[1] 'Umar first discarded what he owned of land, possessions and wealth until he finally looked at his ring and said: "This was presented to me by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik upon his return from the *Maghrib* (Arab West", i.e. the western region of North Africa)", upon which deposited it into the public treasury.[2] This was done to demonstrate his insistence on eradicating all doubtful matters with certainly, while assuring others that what he owned did not resemble injustice or inequity in any shape or form, even if it had been bequeathed to him. This was primarily due to the many stories of illegal extortion committed by the Umayyad *Caliphs* and their agents that were being told by the people. When 'Umar heard that the people were saying he had a sword embellished with silver, while it was actually embellished with iron, he said: "The sword of Abī Muḥallā was embellished with silver so I removed it and embellished it with iron."[3] The means by which he discarded his possessions

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/341).

(2) *Ibid* (5/341-2).

(3) *Ibid* (5/355); *'Umar was Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redress-

and land varied, one of which was by selling them, since once he assumed the Caliphate he saw that his place was one of a servant. According to the author of *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes], Ibn Sa'ad, "He got his articles of luxury [which included items of clothing and perfume] auctioned for 23 thousand *Dinar* and spent the amount on charitable purposes."(1)

The other way was the restoration of the properties confiscated by the Umayyads to their rightful owners. Ibn al-Jawzī reports on the authority of Ismā'īl bin Abī al-Ḥakm that he said: "'Umar was hardly free from the burial ceremonies of Caliph Sulaymān and wanted to take a short respite when his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, asked him if he would like to take a rest before dealing with the cases pertaining to confiscated properties. He replied: 'Yes, I will deal with them after taking a rest'. 'Are you sure that you will live up to that time?' asked his son. 'Umar kissed his dear son and said: 'Praise be to Allāh for having given me such a virtuous son'. He immediately went out, ascended the *Minbar* (pulpit) and publically dealt with the urgent matter before the people, which he began by returning all his movable and immovable properties to the public treasury. His faithful slave, Mazāhim, was deeply moved by this uncommon sight and asked: 'Sir, what have you left for your children?' 'Allāh', was his reply."

Other deposits into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public treasury) included his properties in Jabal al-Wars in Yemen and his

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ing Grievances], p. 205.

(1) *Ibid* (5/345); *Umar was Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 205.

properties in al-Yamāmah.[1] Thus he deposited every one of his properties apart from Fadak, Khaybar[2] and as-Swaydā'. Regarding the latter, 'Umar said: "There is nothing that I have not returned to the wealth of the Muslims except for the spring that is in as-Swaydā', for this is land where I retreat to and be free from the lashes of the Muslims. I have restored all other properties and the annual income of my personal treasury has been reduced to two hundred *Dīnār*."[3]

He restored the possession of the garden of Fadak, located in the north of al-Madīnah, to the descendants of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which had been appropriated by Marwān during the Caliphate of 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (many Allāh be pleased with him) and yielded approximately ten thousand *Dinar* on an annual basis. Upon assuming office, 'Umar took it upon himself to make enquiries and investigate into its status. He was subsequently informed that the matter had been settled from the time of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān. In view of that, he then wrote a letter to Abī Bakr bin Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm in which he said: "To proceed: Having examined and considered the matter of Fadak, I conclude that it does not befit me. Rather, it should be returned to the way it was during the era of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him),

(1) *Umar was Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 207.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

Abī Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and I abandon what took place after them. If this letter has reached you then take hold of it and consider that a man has come to you to execute truth and peace."(1)

On another occasion, 'Umar went back to an Egyptian man from the land of Ḥelwān who he knew his father, 'Abd al-'Azīz, had wronged. 'Umar even returned the house that his father had purchased from ar-Rabī ' bin Khārijah, which had an orphan staying in one of its rooms, based on 'Umar's understanding that it is not permissible for a guardian to sell the property of an orphan. He next turned his attention to the money he had acquired from his estate in Jabal al-Wars in the Yemen and he returned it to the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) despite the fact that its people were in severe need of this money. However, 'Umar was undeniably more prompted by the Hereafter than the life of this world, which was evident from the time he instructed his slave, Mazāḥim, to return the money given to him by al-Baḥrayn every year to the "money of Allāh."(2) Hence, it was through personal example and by beginning with himself before his subjects that 'Umar settled affairs not merely by returning confiscated properties to their rightful owners, but by discarding any of his own properties that he considered either impure and inappropriate or dubious about his right to it.

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/389); *Umar was Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 208.

(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 212.

Disdainful of worldly luxuries, 'Umar preferred simplicity to the extravagance that had become the hallmark of the Umayyad lifestyle, depositing all assets and finery meant for the Caliph into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury). 'Umar was extremely pious and he feared Allāh concerning illegal extortion and the violation of rights. He bade his wife, Fāṭimah, to return the jewelry she had received from her father, Caliph 'Abd al-Mālik, saying: "Having learned that you were given this by your father, you can either return it to the *Bayt al-Māl* or else permit me to separate from you, for I cannot stay in this house with you knowing where it has come from." She said: "Do with it as you will", and thus, the faithful wife complied with his request and deposited all of it in the *Bayt al-Māl*. After her husband's death, her brother, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who succeeded him as Caliph offered to return it to her. "I returned these valuables during my husband's lifetime; why should I take them back after his death?", she told him. After that, Yazīd divided it between his wives and his son's wives.(1)

Returning the Illegally Appropriated Property of the Umayyad Family:

Having embarked on a mission to restore confiscated properties to their rightful owners, starting with himself, he then looked at his family and the families of his uncles and siblings from the Umayyad household. Soon after the burial

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 52-3.

of his cousin, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Umar became astonished by the displays of extravagance practiced by his Umayyad cousins that had not been present during the time of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the Rightly-Guided *Caliphs*. The house of the Umayyads had become accustomed to luxuries at the expense of the common man whereby they would squander vast amounts of wealth on making pompous, grand displays in front of their subjects. The Caliph's personal mounts comprised of a variety of workhorses, stallions and asses, each of which was assigned its own stableman and enjoyed its own pavilion, stable, mattress and footstool. All of this passed on to the new Caliph, including new garments, bottles of fragrances and oils, which had been presented to him by the orders of the deceased Caliph as was befitting a new Caliph. Disdainful of luxuries, 'Umar viewed all of this as extravagant and wasteful, since there was no justification for taking these things at the expense of the Muslims' *Bayt al-Māl*. Rather, he made his objective to spend every *Dirham* therein in the approved manner that Allāh revealed to His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, he immediately ordered Mazāḥim to take away the indulgences, sell them and deposit their total yield in the Muslims' *Bayt al-Māl*.[1]

'Umar had a fixed policy on returning the illegally appropriated property of the Umayyad household from the time that he took hold of the reins of the Caliphate. When

(1) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 213.

a delegation of the Umayyad family went to see him after he had finished burying Sulaymān to ask him what they had been promised by the former Umayyad *Caliphs*, 'Abd al-Mālik wanted to respond to them on behalf of his father. It was at that point that 'Umar revealed to him his policy, saying: [*Say (*Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Verily, if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of a great Day]* (*az-Zumar,* 39:13). He then clarified it for him another time when he came to demand that he act swiftly in exacting the confiscated property from the Umayyads, on which occasion he said: "O my son! Your people have tied up this affair knot by knot, loop by loop. If I conspire against them to exact what is in their possession, I would not be safe from them slitting me open and spilling my blood. By Allāh, my demise from this world is easier on me than to shed an ounce of blood of a war captive. Would you be pleased if your father, one of these days, dies while committing *Bid'ah* (heresy; innovation), or would you rather he lived by the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) until Allāh judges between me and your people based on the Truth, while He is the Best of Judges?"[1] He continued to elucidate his policy further after his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, asked: "What keeps you from pursuing what you want? As by Him in Whose Hand in my soul! I would not care if I were put into chains if it enabled to do it!" "Is that so?" remarked 'Umar. "Yes", 'Abd al-Mālik replied. "Praise be to Allāh for giving me such a pious and virtuous son to help

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 260-3.

me with my religion. However, if the people get wind of what you just said, they would oblige me to use the sword and I would not be able to deny it. In the event that they do so, I would find no escape from the sword and there is no good that cannot be achieved without using the sword. My son! Managing people is a difficult sport. Therefore, should Allāh prolong my life, I beg that He fulfils my wishes and speeds up my death; for Allāh knows that I have wanted this."[1]

The approach and etiquette used by 'Umar to implement his policies were wise and good, which served to smooth the process of taking decisive action. This was done by first discarding what was in his own possession of property to either their rightful owners or to the *Bayt al-Māl,* and then by moving on to the house of the Umayyads, whom he assembled together and demanded the return of all money and property that had been acquired illegitimately.[2] The early days of 'Umar's Caliphate witnessed the large-scale depletion of extensive funds and properties accumulated by the Umayyad ruling family. Once 'Umar assumed office, he took the necessary measures to ensure that the assets were rightfully channelled back to the *Bayt al-Māl* for the welfare of the Muslims and not dominated by one person or one party. Meticulously, money and property of every type and quantity was traced through various means and avenues, one by one, in order to return them to their rightful place. By 'Umar's

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 262-3.
(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 215.

estimation, confiscated property, rewards, special allowances, gifts, estates and land, all in the form of fixed assets and cash flow, amounted to a vast portion of the *'Ummah*'s money exceeding almost half of the total funds.[1] Not long after, the Umayyad tribe began to feel that they had been stripped of their natural and legal rights by 'Umar and so they rose up to voice their displeasure at his policy and declared their firm objection to it. 'Umar's response was: "By Allāh, I desire that no wrong remains on the land except that I compensate for it, which I have vowed to do on the condition that if I do not, then I will feel the pain of losing one of my limbs, for it to return to the way it was, such that it might happen all over again. Therefore, if I do not compensate for some wrong that remains, I have myself to answer to."[2]

To his dismay, however, the Umayyad tribe did not empathise with his determination and resolution concerning the rights of the *Ummah,* since they had never hesitated to violate them before. Afterwards, they convened a meeting wherein they decided to nominate one of al-Walīd's son, who was their elder and adviser, to write to 'Umar. Hence, he wrote: "To proceed: It is apparent that you have forgotten who the former *Caliphs* were and you conduct yourself in a manner other than the way they conducted themselves. What you have declared illegitimate in fact dishonours the former *Caliphs* and harms their children after them; that is not for

(1) *Sīrat 'Umarbin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umarbin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 115.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147-151.

you to do. Therefore bring what Allāh does not allow to an end, for you have behaved in disagreement with the truth in relation to your kith and kin by your pursuance of the wealth, inheritance and rights of the Quraysh so that you might unjustly, adversely and immorally deposit them into your *Bayt al-Māl*. Fear Allāh, O son of 'Abd al-'Azīz, and return them, as you will certainly not be comfortable whilst up on your *Minbar* (pulpit) should you choose to alienate and wrong your relatives. By Allāh Who bestowed Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the special honour that he had, you have far exceeded the bounds of Allāh with this leadership of yours that you claim is a burden upon you, which it is. In that case, suppress some of your inclinations and refrain yourself."(1) The tactics employed by the Umayyad tribe against 'Umar's policy that are manifest in this letter are:

- That he has contradicted the way of the former Caliphs, deprecated them and dishonoured their actions
- He has offended the children of the former Caliphs
- His actions are not harmonious with the truth
- If he alienates his family then his Caliphate is in jeopardy

There is no doubt that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policy threatened the standing of the Umayyad family and weakened their centres of power, which resulted in their use

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 126-7; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by Sāliḥ* al-'Alī, p. 194.

of threatening tactics against the standing Caliph. Of course, this presented a real danger to 'Umar and his Caliphate,[1] however, 'Umar's response to the letter intensified the fire of truth that gushed forth with his every word. He wrote: "Woe unto you and woe unto you father! How numerous your claimants and adversaries will be on the Day of Judgment! Be patient, for if Allāh should grant me a prolonged life and restore the truth to His people, I will devote my attention to you and your family. I have acted upon the clear proof, while you have left the truth behind you [...]"[2]

The Umayyad Family Resort to Calm Dialogue:

Having begun to despair at 'Umar's rigid withstanding of their staunch collective disposition, the Umayyad family decided to resort to calm dialogue with the hope that they might be able to achieve their goals by this way instead. One day when they were speaking to him, they consulted him on the issue of the status of relatives and showing kindness towards kith and kin. In response, he answered them: "I will not extend my money to you and as for this money – referring to the public funds – your right to it is like the right of any Muslim. By Allāh! I do not see that matters are ever going to change so much so that should the people on the earth do as they have seen you do, they will surely be afflicted with a

(1) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz by Sāliḥ* al-'Alī, p. 195.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147-151.

calamity from the punishment of Allāh."[1] One day, Hāshim bin 'Abd al-Mālik entered upon him and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! I am the messenger of your people to you. They would like me to inform you that they say: 'Continue to do as you see fit concerning that which is under your authority and leave what belonged to your predecessors and now to their beneficiaries alone'." Wittily, 'Umar remarked: "Do you think that I should bring out either Mu'āwiyah's records or 'Abd al-Mālik's?" "The most preceding one", Hishām answered. So 'Umar said: "In that case, I believe that is the Book of Allāh. Therefore I am imputed to that which has been brought to me by those under my authority and those who preceded me."[2]

The Umayyad Family Send 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Paternal Aunt:

When the men of the Umayyad family proved incapable of intimidating 'Umar or getting him to moderate his policy in their favour, they turned to his aunt, Fāṭimah bint Marwān. This particular aunt of his was well acquainted with the *Caliphs* and 'Umar had never denied her any request or need before. She was held in high esteem by the Umayyad family who respected her tremendously, just as 'Umar had always done before he became the Caliph. Thus, when she entered upon him, he honoured her as he was accustomed to doing and

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 114-5.

(2) *Ibid*, pp. 118-9; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, pp. 117-8.

gave her a cushion to sit on. She then said to him: "Indeed, your relatives are complaining about you and mention that you have confiscated all the lands that an earlier Caliph had given them." He said: "I have neither refused them their rights or anything belonging to them nor have I taken their rights or anything belonging to them." She said: "I witnessed them talking and I fear they will one day rise up against you." "I will be fearful of that every day except on the Day of Judgment when Allāh will not shield me from its evil."

'Umar then stopped commenting and instead asked for a *Dīnār* (coin; unit of account), a piece of meat and some iron to be brought to him. He then threw the coin into a fire and began to blow on it until it turned red, after which he picked it up with something. When the iron became red hot, he put the piece of meat on it. It started sizzling and giving off a smell. He then turned to his aunt and said: "Do you want me to burn in Hell like this?" "No. Of course not", she replied. He asked again: "What uncle do you commiserate for having done this to your nephew?"[1] 'Umar continued to say: "What I have done is according to the Word of Allāh. I have executed justice. Whatever the Umayyads had looted, I have confiscated for the state." As a result, his aunt was deeply moved by what he had witnessed from 'Umar and requested that he continue to act as he saw fit. She also said that the Umayyads should listen to what he was saying and that he had painted a lucid picture of what social justice means in Islām whereby wealth

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 117.

and ease extends to all.

He said: "Indeed, the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent as a mercy, and not as a punishment, for all humankind. He then chose to leave a river behind for the people to drink from indiscriminately. After that, Abū Bakr was appointed and he left the river as it was. 'Umar succeeded him and did as they both had done. The river then ceased to be a source of water for Yazīd, Marwān, 'Abd al-Mālik, his son, al-Walīd, Sulaymān and the sons of 'Abd al-Mālik, until the matter has now come to me. The greatest river has become so dry that its people with never see it until it is returns to what it was." She replied: "You have said enough. I wanted to hear what you had to say but as what we have just discussed here, I will never mention of it again." At that point, she went back to the Umayyads and told them what he said.[1] According to one narration, she said to them: "You have brought this upon yourselves. You married with the children of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb and now he comes resembling his grandfather." Upon hearing that, they remained silent.[2]

Fading Collective Umayyad Resistance:

Before long, traces of collective resistance on the part of the Umayyads had all but disappeared following their consideration of 'Umar's grandfather with regard to the

(1) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] (3/270).
(2) *Ibid* (3/271).

Ummah's wealth and because of which they said: "Nothing else remains to be said or done."[1] On the other hand, every one of them made their own individual endeavor to retrieve what they could of their confiscated funds, but now that they had become fragmented, it had become more appropriate for 'Umar to confront them one by one about what they were striving to achieve. As such, he individually informed them that the rights of the *Ummah* could not be bargained with just like that.[2]

Restoring Rights to their Owners:

'Umar did not just put an end to the Umayyad's attempts to retrieve the confiscated money and return it to the *Bayt al-Māl;* that was not enough for him. He went a step further by publically announcing to the Islāmic *Ummah* the names of every eligible claimant who remained to have their rights restored by a governor or member of the Umayyad family or if they had a genuine grievance to be taken up by them. 'Umar thereby went forth bearing proof so that he could address each case, which he did, one after another, to the many people whose testimonies matched their complaints

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p.58-9; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 119.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 119.

of injustice pertaining to land, farms, money and property.[1] In one instance, 'Umar's governor in al-Baṣrah had sent a man to him whose land had been savaged. Upon returning the land to him, 'Umar then said to him: "How much did you spend in order to get to me?" "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! You ask me about my expenses whilst you have already returned my land to me that is worth more than one hundred thousand?" he asked. Even so, Umar said: "I have only restored what is rightfully yours", and without hesitation he handed him sixty *Dirhams* to compensate for his travel expenses.[2] Ibn Muṣā states: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not cease to rectify injustices from the moment he assumed office right up until his death."[3]

One day, a band of Muslims turned up and quarreled with Rūḥ bin al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik in the marketplace, upon which they presented him with a testimony to bring legal action against him. 'Umar thereby ordered Rūḥ to return the shops to them without referring to al-Walīd's records, following which Rūḥ stood up and threatened them. One of the men, however, was able to deter it and went to inform 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz about what had happened, because of which 'Umar instructed his chief guard to follow Rūḥ and in the event that he did not return the shops to their owners, he should be beheaded. Fearful for his life, Rūḥ immediately

(1) *Ibid*, p.120.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 146-7.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/341).

returned the shops.[1]

'Umar once returned a patch of land to a group of desert nomads who had cultivated it only for it to be later seized by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Upon granting it back to them, 'Umar said: "The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Whoever cultivates barren land, it belongs to him."[2] "Umar showed much love for the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Prophetic Household) and restored all of their rights to them. He once said to Fāṭimah bint 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with them): "O daughter of 'Alī! By Allāh, there is no family on the face of the earth that is more beloved to me than your family. You are more to beloved to me than my own family."[3]

His Dismissal of All Unjust Governors and Commanders:

One of the first tasks 'Umar undertook upon assuming office was to filter out all of the unjust governors and commanders in charge and dismiss them from their posts. Among those dismissed was Khālid bin ar-Rayyān who had been Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's chief bodyguard and the executor of everyone Sulaymān ordered him to behead. In

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 60.

(2) *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jām'* [The Authenticated Compilation] by al-Albāni, no. 2766.

(3) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life Story and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 131; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 45.

place of Khālid, 'Umar appointed 'Amr bin Muhājir al-Anṣārī and said to Khālid: "O Khālid! Turn this sword on yourself. O Allāh, I have laid off Khālid bin ar-Rayyān for you. O Allāh! Never exalt him." He then turned to 'Amr bin Muhājir and said: "By Allāh, you will come to know, O 'Amr, that there is no bond between you and I except for the bond of Islām. However, I heard that you recite the Qur'ān much and I have seen you pray in places where you thought nobody could see you; indeed, you pray beautifully. Therefore, take this sword as I have appointed you to be my guard."(1) That was 'Umar's approach to dismissing the unjust and it was with such an attitude that he selected his governors, judges, commanders and so forth.

He searched for the most pious of characters in faith and religious observance. Somebody once criticized one of the governors chosen by 'Umar and joked with him by putting a stick between his own eyes as he bowed in prostration, saying: "I wanted to pretend that I was you", i.e. he wanted the mark of prostration on his face like him. As a sign of a righteous man, this mark is proof of ample prostration and it was on account of this that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz chose him. This is not to suggest that 'Umar would base his judgments on mere assumption, as he would also put that person to the test to see whether he was correct to think so. For instance, he saw a man who prayed a great deal and he wanted to test him to see whether he should appoint him or not and so he sent a man of distinction to him who said: "O so- and –so! You

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p.50.

know my status with the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* so what would you do for me if I made him appoint you to one of the provinces?" The man answered: "I would give you gifts year in and year out." 'Umar's agent went back to report to him and based on that 'Umar decided to discard the man's appointment to office for having failed the test.(1)

Usāmah bin Zayd at-Tanūkhī who was in charge of the *Kharāj* (Board of Revenue) in Egypt was among those dismissed by 'Umar for his brutal and excessive penalization of people inconsistent with Allāh's revelation. By way of example, he would chop off hands without first corroborating the conditions for amputation. 'Umar consequently sentenced him to a year in prison within every metropolis during which time he remained shackled and the only time he was released from his chains was for prayer, after which would be put back into them. Thus, he was imprisoned in Egypt for a year and then in Palestine for year, but it was during this time that 'Umar died, and so with Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's accession to the Caliphate, Usāmah was reinstated to his original post.(2)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to Yazīd bin Abī Muslim concerning his removal from office in Africa owing to his disdain and ignorance in the face of authority, however big or small, in an inequitable manner and in contradiction of the truth. On top of that, he would habitually praise Allāh and invoke

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al'Azīz] by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr (1/91).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

Him whilst ordering his people to carry out punishments at his discretion. He would say: "Glory and praise be to Allāh. O boy! Take him to the spot..." in reference to some location or another, or he would say: "There is no one worthy of worship but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest! Take him to the place of...", which he would order with utter maliciousness and brutally. In view of that, 'Umar issued his timely dismissal.[1] Thus, 'Umar undertook an extensive campaign to dismiss unjust governors and appoint the righteous. His *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) on dealing with governors will be elaborated on in due course, by the permission of Allāh, the Sublime.

Compensating All Injustices Committed Against Converts:

Prior to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, converts to Islām had been made to suffer many injustices and it had been the case that the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) had been imposed on even those who converted to Islām amongst them, similar to what had happened to the converts in Irāq, Egypt and Khorasān (a historic region that covered parts of modern day Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) who had been barred from making *Hijrah* (Islāmic Migration). During the era of 'Abd al-Mālik, al-Ḥajjāj inflicted large-scale oppression and brutality on the converts in 'Irāq by demanding from them a full rate of taxation, prohibiting them from making *Hijrah* from their towns, and so on. All this contributed to their uprising and participation in the

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 32-3.

revolution with Ibn al-Ash'ath against al-Ḥajjāj who had done the same to the converts in Egypt and Khorasān.

Therefore, when 'Umar came to power, he abolished all inequitable legislation previously authorized against these converts, on the subject of which he wrote to his officials: "If a Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian among the people of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) embraces Islām from today onwards, then let him share the domain of the Muslims and differentiate the domain that he was previously in, for he is entitled to the same as the Muslims, just as what is upon them is also upon him. Therefore, land from which *Kharāj* is paid cannot be transferred to Muslims, who can lease such land, but in that case, they will be required to pay *Kharāj* from it. They are thereby obliged to allow him to mix freely and support him in his land and home, for the Shade of Allāh is on all Muslims."(1)

On the same note, he corresponded with his official in Egypt, Ḥayyān bin Shurayḥ, saying: "Lift the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from anyone who has converted to Islām among the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule). Allāh, the Glorious and Majestic, certainly says: [*But if they turn [to Allāh], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for Allāh is Most Forgiving and Merciful*" (*at-Tawbah*, 9:5). And He says: "*Fight those of the People of the Book who do not [truly] believe in Allāh and the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not*

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 78-9.

obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit] (*at-Tawbah*, 9:29)." However, 'Umar's official wrote back: "To proceed: Indeed, Islām obliges the *Jizyah*. Al-Ḥārith bin Nābitah hitherto paid 20,000 *Dinar* to the Central Diwān (Board of Administration" in this case of taxes and revenues). I am therefore of the opinion, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, that you should endorse their compliance with it."(1) In response to his recommendation, 'Umar retorted: "To proceed: Your letter reached me and I have appointed a solider of Egypt to you as I am aware of your weaknesses. I have further given my messenger orders to flog you twenty lashes over your head! Therefore, relieve whoever has converted to Islām from paying the *Jizyah* and may Allāh revile your opinion! Verily, Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a guide and not as a tax collector! Upon my life or a life more miserable, let it be that all people enter His *Dīn* (the Religion of Islām)."(2) According to the narration of Ibn Sa'ad, 'Umar says: "To proceed: Indeed, Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a preacher and not as a tax collector. Should the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) hasten to Islām and diminish the *Jizyah* upon receiving my letter, then abandon your letter and accept it (i.e. their conversion to Islām)."(3)

'Umar's tax collector in Egypt was not the only one who

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(1) *Al-Khiṭaṭ* [The Guiding Principles] by al-Maqrīzī (1/78); *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 233.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/384).

sought allowance from 'Umar to exact the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from those who had converted to Islām. The tax-collector appointed to al-Kūfa in 'Irāq, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, asked him to take a lump-sum *Jizyah* for the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians who had converted to Islām. He too received a firm reply from 'Umar, who clearly stated: "You wrote to me to asking me about the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians of al-Ḥīrah who have embraced Islām and yet they pay a heavy *Jizyah*. You are asking me to exact the *Jizyah* from them even as Allāh, the Majestic, sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a caller to Islām and not as a tax collector! Therefore, compulsory on the wealth of whoever among those religions accepts Islām is the *Sadaqah* (Alms) and not the *Jizyah*, and he can inherit from his Muslim relatives should he have any and they can inherit from him. However, if he does not have an heir, his inheritance is to be deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl* to be shared amongst the Muslims. In the event that this happens, the money of Allāh that is distributed to the Muslims will be acknowledged in his name and a source of comfort for him."(1)

On the same note, 'Umar's agent in Baṣrah, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, wrote: "To proceed: An increasing number of people are entering into Islām and I fear that your fiscal reforms s will erode the *Kharāj* (land tax) tax system and deplete the Treasury." 'Umar wrote back: "I understood your letter and,

(1) *Al-Kharāj* [Tax and Revenue] by Abī Yūsuf, p. 142; *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 234.

by Allāh, glad would I be to see all people become Muslim so that you and I would have to till the soil with our own hands to learn a living."[1] Additionally, he annulled the ban prohibiting converts to Islām in 'Irāq from migrating that had been enforced by al-Ḥajjāj and in doing so 'Umar granted them their right to live in peace and comfort. Under 'Umar's new reforms, converts living within the Islāmic State began to enjoy the justice and equality felt by the other Muslim citizens.[2]

Relieving the Ahl adh-Dhimmah (Non-Muslims Living under Muslim Rule) from Injustices:

During 'Abd al-Mālik's Caliphate, the *Jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslims living in the Islāmic State) had been raised for the people of Cyprus, which had initially been conquered by Mu'āwiyah bin 'Abī Sufyān who fixed a peace treaty stipulating a payment of seven thousand *Dinars,* that the people of Cyprus should act in good faith towards the Muslims. This treaty remained in effect right up until the time of 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān who increased their payment by a thousand *Dīnār;* an amendment that was enforced under the succeeding calīphs but annulled by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who reinstated the original covenant.[3] The *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* in 'Irāq had also

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 99-100.

(2) *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 234.

(3) *Futūh al-Buldān* [The Conquests of Countries], p. 159; *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-*

been levied a heavier *Jizyah* that 'Umar also annulled as part of his general policy to compensate and remedy all injustices which had been administered to the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah*, restore their unlawfully seized houses of worship, release their lands and grant them their rights and privileges under the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law).

'Umar's attitude is conveyed in his letter to his official in Baṣrah, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, in which he wrote: "To proceed: "Allāh, Glorified is He, commands the exacting of the *Jizyah* from those who renounce Islām and choose to arrogantly disbelieve at their own clear loss, so impose it on whoever can bear its burden and stand between them and the prosperity of the land; in that lies good for the livelihood of the Muslims and their strength against their enemies. Look at *the Ahl adh-Dhimmah* from aforetime who received a pension from the *Bayt al-Māl* of the Muslims once they grew elderly, feeble and incapable of earning. If a Muslim man owning properties grows old and feeble and incapable of earning, he is entitled to receive support from the *Bayt al-Māl* so as to differentiate between death and old age. I was informed of an incident in which the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, passed by an old man from the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* who was sat begging in the streets. 'Umar went up to him and said: 'We have not done justice to you. We levied the *Jizyah* on you during your youth and we have neglected you in your old age'. He then took the old man by the hand to the *Bayt al-Māl* and provided

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Maẓālim [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 240.

him with a pension."[1]

Like 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the policies of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were not only aimed at alleviating people of injustices but also at helping and supporting them. Such was the case when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his official in Kūfa saying: "Find out whose land has become diminished due to paying the *Jizyah* and provide them with financial assistance to cultivate their land. Inform them that we do not want payment from them for a year to two years."[2] 'Umar was an ardent advocator of adopting a strategy of mercy and clemency towards the people. In keeping with that, he prohibited the use of torture tactics against the people of Baṣrah to obtain the *Kharāj* tax after his official therein, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, wrote him: "If you accept, some form of punishment should be carried out on the people who choose not to cooperate when it comes to paying the obligatory *Kharāj*." 'Umar replied: "How strange it is that you should seek my permission to torture human beings as if I were some kind of safe haven for you from the punishment of Allāh, or as if my pleasure can rescue you of Allāh's displeasure! Therefore, once you have received this letter, approach those who pay it with compassion, otherwise administer an oath from them. By Allāh, it is better for them to face Allāh having committed their treachery than for you to face Him after having tortured them. Peace."[3]

(1) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, p. 57.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 320; *Umar wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 241.

(3) *Al-Kharāj* [Tax and Revenue] by Abī Yūsuf, p. 129.

Another injustice inflicted on the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) involved the capture of girls and women from Lawātah (said to be modern day Djerba) in North Africa prior to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's accession to power. Concerning the women of Lawātah, Abū 'Ubayd mentions that 'Umar wrote: "Whoever sends you any of those women, do not put a price on them as a price cannot be deemed lawful for her. If one already has any of these women, seek her hand in marriage from her father, otherwise return her to her people." Abū Ubayd states that these women from Lawātah were Berber natives with whom theymay have entered a covenant. Ibn Shihāb says: "'Uthmān procured the *Jizyah* from the Berbers but they later began to cause mischief which led to their being taken into captivity." In any case, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote what he did to put an end to the wrongdoing that was taking place against them.[1] Similarly, he restored the unlawfully seized houses of worship of the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah*,[2] released their lands and granted them their rights and privileges under the *Shar'īah* that had been exploited by the Muslims for their own personal gain even though it was in contradiction of their treaty.[3] Regarding it, he wrote to the official saying: "We believe that you are exploiting the people of the land. Only oppression can be the aim of such a thing."[4]

(1) *Futūh al-Buldān* [The Conquests of Countries], p. 226-7.

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 245.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

By taking measures such as these, 'Umar was able to successfully restore peace, contentment and ease within the state for all parties by way of practically demonstrating that it was possible for them to live safely and comfortably under the shade of Islām which extended its liberality and justice to them, protected their rights and interests, and neither harmed, intimidated or enslaved them. They were granted their mutual, inalienable rights and, equally, they were obliged to observe certain duties stipulated under Islāmic Law and the basic injunctions of the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) of His Holy Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

The Establishment of Justice for the People of Samarkand:

Immediately after 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was elected caliph, a delegation of men from Samarkand (the second largest city in Uzbekistan) went to speak to Sulaymān Abī as-Sarrī and said: "Qutaybah has betrayed and wronged us by seizing our town. Allāh has shown us justice and equity, therefore if we are allowed, we would like to send a delegation to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* to complain of our injustices and if we are within our rights, he will address our needs." Sulaymān correspondingly granted their request and hence a delegation of men represented their case to 'Umar. Consequently, he

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Ḥakm, p. 83.

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 245.

wrote to Sulaymān bin Abī as-Sarrī, saying: "Indeed, the people of Samarkand have come complaining to me of the injustices inflicted upon them, stating that Qutaybah has unjustifiably stationed his army in the town in their midst and forced them to leave. Therefore, when my letter reaches you, appoint a tribunal to judge and settle the dispute between Qutaybah and the people of Samarkand. If the judgment of the tribunal goes against the army chief and his men are asked to vacate, they must do so at once and the people may return to the way they were before Qutaybah appeared on the scene."

Sulaymān appointed Jumay'a bin Ḥāḍir as the judge for the enquiry. After it was over, he, although himself a Muslim, passed the judgment that the Muslim army must vacate the town. He also remarked that the commander of the Muslim forces ought to have served an ultimatum of war to the city, and according to the Islāmic Law relating to war, he ought to have cancelled all the treaties with them so that the people of Samarkand could get time to prepare for war, declaring: "Sudden attack on them without warning was unlawful." However, once the army had retired to their army bases, the people of Samarkand saw an opportunity to declare war against the Muslim forces with the aim of taking victory by force and establishing a new treaty of their own. On the contrary, the people of Soghd (a main province of Tajikistan bordering Samarkand) said: "Rather, we are satisfied with what happened and we will not re-declare war" and they tried to appease the people on those grounds. Their scholars said:

"We have mixed and lived side by side with those people. They are peaceful with us and we are with them. Should you decide that we are to return to war, it would be futile and we do not know whom the victory will belong to. We would only be bringing hostility upon ourselves." Satisfied with the outcome of the tribunal, the people of Soghd subsequently left matters as they were and chose not to challenge them.[1]

When the people of Samarkand witnessed this state of affairs, they were convinced that this was an unparalleled case in the history of humankind, that is, the state keeping its Commander-in-Chief and the armies under such strict discipline and control, bound by lofty moral principles. Having decided that fighting against the Muslim army would be futile, they otherwise came to regard it as a mercy and blessing. Therefore, they agreed to live with the Islāmic army in Samarkand. The amazing aspect of this incident must be emphasized: that the inhabitants of a city complain to the victorious government and its judges decide the case against the victorious army, ordering it to be vacated therefrom, saying that they are not allowed to live there without the consent of the people of that city. If only the modern nations of the twenty-first century were bound by a strict moral code and lofty principles, as demonstrated by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, who took the swift and decisive action that he did! His remarkable observance and administration of the *Sharī 'ah* (Law) of Allāh is what allowed him to attain the loftiest goals and reach the highest stations. A number of important points

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] (7/472).

can be discerned about 'Umar's high level of justice:

- People understood that it was acceptable to make a complaint, express a grievance and demand their rights on the assurance of a fair ruler, as they knew that their claims were going to be taken seriously and addressed justly. These oppressed people remained silent under the rule of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik and Sulaymān. When they witnessed the justice of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, they put their case forth.
- 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not ignore their case and furthermore referred them to a legal tribunal as someone who submits to Islām and not his own whims and desires. He could have done what a lot a people in charge do, in sending threatening messages and warnings to the chief claimants and taking measures to have them reprimanded, however, 'Umar was devoted to alleviating injustices and executing justice, which can only be done by referring it to a judiciary and having them pass a verdict on it.
- When they were given insight into 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's letter, the people and their scholars gradually learned that they would be losers in both instances, that is, whether the ruling was against them or if they revolted, and that their welfare rested on keeping to the status quo. In acceptance of this, they stopped suffering injustice and experienced the justice of

Islāmic rule.[1]

His Approval of Sufficient Proof in Compensating the Aggrieved:

Bearing in mind the enormity of injustice practiced by the former governors against the common people and the propensity of grievances made on a normal basis, 'Umar made it so it was no longer compulsory for the aggrieved persons to present compelling and convincing evidence to support their claims; on the contrary, he considered even slight proof sufficient. In the event that he knew the claimant's face, he would compensate him without commissioning him to bring any form of proof. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, Abū az-Zinād said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would compensate the victims of injustice without requesting adequate proof and he was satisfied with even slight proof. If he knew the aggrieved person by face, he compensated him without further ado. As soon as 'Umar learned of the former governors' ill-treatment of the people, he commissioned the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) in 'Irāq with compensating the victims, who even put cases forth from as far as the Shām (Levant). [2] 'Umar's initiative to facilitate the process of making claims in the best possible way was particularly effective because it saved both time and effort.[3] Here, 'Umar lay down an important principle in differentiating between establishing the facts in a normal

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15, 16/62).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 106-7.

(3) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/558).

case from establishing the facts in an administrative case. With regard to the former, the position of compelling and convincing evidence and the corroboration of facts may vary such that in cases where the injustice appears evident, slight proof can be considered adequate for passing a ruling.[1]

Lifting Unlawful Taxes:

The quality of goods had diminished due to the unlawful heavy *Makas* (Trading taxes formerly levied during the days of *Jāhiliyyah*) that been illegally imposed on the people, even after having procured the obligatory Za*k*āt (Prescribed Alms) from Muslims and the *Jizyah* (Tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule), *'Ushūr* (Import and export duty) and *Kharāj* (Land tax) from the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule), which was beyond the people's capacity.

The Umayyads had no accountability to the treasury. To support their lavish lifestyles, they collected enormous taxes from Persia and Egypt. They compelled traders to sell them their merchandise at discount prices. The Governors' appointees received gifts of gold and silver in return for favours. 'Umar reversed those trading taxes and established strict accountability by punishing corrupt officials, as is clear from the narration of Muḥammad bin Qays who said: "When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed head of state, he alleviated the trading taxes in every land and the *Jizyah* (Tax paid by

(1) *Niẓām al-Ḥukm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Government in Islāmic Law and History] (2/565).

non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from every Muslim."[1] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah ordering him to remove it, stating: "The *Makas* is not a trading tax, rather it is fraud, concerning which Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*And to not defraud the people in their property or spread evil in the land*] (*ash-Shu'arā'*, 26:183). Therefore, accept *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) from whoever pays it from his wealth and for those who do not, Allāh will hold them to account.[2] Similarly, 'Umar wrote to his official over Palestine, 'Abdullah bin 'Awf, saying: "Demolish the *Makas* by carrying it off to the sea and extinguishing it in a single blow."[3] As we established earlier, the *Makas* was the import tax levied on traders within the marketplaces, which had been a practice of pre-Islāmic times. 'Umar was of the opinion that this tax was unjust and so he abolished it,[4] drawing on the Qur'ānic Verse: "*And to not defraud the people in their property or spread evil in the land.*] (*ash-Shu'arā'*, 26:183)

Compensating from the Zakāt (Prescribed Alms):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz resolved to give back what belonged to the victims of extortion from the *Buyūt al-Māl* (Public Treasuries), which he did by means of distributing the

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/345).

(2) *Ibid* (5/383).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 113.

(4) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/561).

Zakāt obtained by each one for one year.[1] Mālik bin Anas reported on the authority of Ayūb ash-Shakhtiyānī that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz returned what had been illegally appropriated from the victims of extortion and deposited into the *Buyūt al-Māl* (Public Treasuries) by giving back from each *Bayt al-Māl* and commissioning the procurement of the *Zakāt* after the people had been free from paying it for a number of years." He later wrote another letter stating: "I am of the opinion that the return on this money cannot be postponed, therefore do not levy the *Zakāt* except for one year."[2] 'Amr bin Maymūn is reported to have said: "During the rule of 'Abd al-Mālik, the governor took money from a poor man by the name of Abū 'Ā'ishah amounting to twenty thousand *Dirham* and deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl*. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power, he returned the money to that man's son to compensate for the crime committed against him, upon which he wrote to Maymūn: 'Pay them their money and take the *Zakāt* for this year. However, if the money we took from them is not covered after having levied the *Zakāt* then leave it."[3]

This is how 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was able to establish justice within his state and he (may Allāh have mercy on him) would teach his governors that justice was the lifeblood of the state in all aspects, as he demonstrated when some of his officials wrote to him saying: "To proceed: Indeed, our city has fallen into ruin. Should the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* want to

(1) *Ibid* (2/566).

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/342).

(3) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (3/202).

cut us off from funds, this will certainly be our lot." He wrote back to them: "To proceed: I understand your letter and you mention that your city has become ruined. Therefore, upon receiving this letter of mine, fortify your city with justice and oust out all injustice, as that will restore it to peace."[1] He also wrote to some of his officials, saying: "If you are able to carry out justice, excellence and righteousness in the way that your predecessors carried out injustice, hostility and oppression, then do so and there is no might or power except with Allāh."[2] He wrote to Abī Bakr bin Hazm: "Seek out justice by finding every injustice committed by those before you against a Muslim or one with whom a treaty has been agreed and restore their right to them. If those people have already died, compensate their heirs."[3] Due to his eagerness to administer justice (may Allāh bestow mercy on him), 'Umar faced many hardships, difficulties, resistance and obstacles whereby he would pay out money to appease certain individuals so that he could execute the truth, spread justice and eradicate oppression. One day, his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, entered upon him and said: "O father! What prevents you from administering justice as you see fit? As, by Allāh! I would not care if I were put in chains if it enabled you to do what you want!" 'Umar remarked: "O son! It is only because managing the people is a complicated task. Of course I want to revive all just affairs and do that so adeptly that it

(1) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 23; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 226.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Major Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/383-4).

(3) *Ibid* (2/342-3).

eradicates the world's greed with it until the people have an aversion to it and feel alleviated of it."[1]

In keeping with this, 'Umar rewarded those who showed good conduct, highlighted some error or pointed out some injustice that the victim was not able to report for himself. He wrote a message that he sent to be read out to all *Hajj* pilgrims at every station and assembly they reached, which read: "To proceed: "Whichever man approaches us for the purpose of rectifying an injustice or orders that Allāh betters him specifically or generally in this world, he shall have a reward no less than one hundred *Dīnār* to up to three hundred *Dīnār* on account of his claim. Following the hardship endured by him, Allāh will have mercy on him by reviving some truth or diminishing some falsity through him or granting him some good."[2] As a way of making the people find his justice and mercy agreeable and pleasant so that they would seek his shade, he would say: "By Allāh! I would rather carry out justice for just one day and have Allāh, the Sublime, seize me!"[3] He further aspired to enhance the fruits of his justice that had been received by all people of high and low social ranking, which he expressed in his statement: "If I ruled over you for fifty years, I would not have accomplished justice."[4] His campaign to alleviate wrongdoing meant that 'Umar's justice and equity even extended to animals, which can be

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 226.

(2) *Ibid*, p.227.

(3) *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa al-Lughāt* [The Refinement of Names of Languages] (2/23).

(4) *Tārīkh Ibn 'Asākir* [Ibn 'Asākir's History] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 227.

seen from the following examples:

Prohibiting Prodding Animals with Iron Rods and Overburdening their Loads:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated treating animals with kindness and not harming or punishing them, as 'Abū Yūsuf says: "'Ubaydullah bin 'Umar informed us that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz forbade the goading of animals with iron rods and overloading their saddles beyond the fixed capacity."(1) He thereby issued orders prohibiting the use of heavy loads on horses and asses, and likewise, the use of iron rods to goad animals by prodding them.(2)

Fixing the Load of Camels to Six-Hundred Roṭl (a weight equal to approx. 3.202 kg):

Upon hearing that a people from Egypt had been loading their camels more than they could bear, 'Umar decided to write to its governor to fix the maximum load for camels to six-hundred *Roṭl* and demanded that he notify him of their compliance and his implementation of the order.(3)

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(1) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (12/332); *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/573).

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 71.

(3) *Fiqh Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/572).

To push forward the principles of justice and eradicating wrong, 'Umar executed his policies at every level within his state to ensure that justice reached everyone and compassed everything in society and that he combated injustice in every shape and form -- may Allāh have mercy on him.

Equality:

Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*O People, We have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allāh is the most pious of you.*] (*al-Ḥujurāt*, 49:13). The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Is your Lord not One Lord? There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab or a white man and a black man, except for [his level of] *Taqwā* (God-consciousness)."[1] 'Umar began to implement this principle within his state, the first indicator of which is his interest in the principle of equality, which was was made evident when he vowed that he and his family would have the same quality of life as the people.[2] He asserted: "By Allāh, I wish to begin with myself, and my family who are a part of me until we live just as you live. By Allāh, by Allāh! If I wanted to say other than this to please my tongue, I would know the motives for it."[3]

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(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 297.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 112.

In one of his sermons, he said: "There is no one among you who notifies us of his need except that I love to relieve him of it as best as I can."[1] 'Umar adopted the principle of equality between peoples to extend to their rights and duties in all areas of life such that he did not discriminate between people in appointing them to positions and offices, and likewise, he would not give something to someone who did not have the right to have it. He was equal in his treatment of the chiefs and nobles of the Umayyad family and the common people, whereby he prohibited the special allowances and granted the former individuals had previously enjoyed. When they went to confront him about this, he said in return: "My money will not be extended to you and as for this money (i.e. the money belonging to the Muslim's *Bayt al-Māl*), your right to it is the same as that of every Muslim." He based his fiscal policy on equality whereby the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) belonged to all Muslims who had an equal share to it and not one group having a monopoly over the rest of the people. The firmness of his adherence to the principle of equality can be seen in the instance when he witnessed some members of the Umayyad family seize a large area of land and close it off so that the public could not gain from it, upon which he said: "The shield you put around applies to all Muslims in general. Its leader is like a Muslim man, the rain that Allāh descends upon it is for His servants and they are all equal."[2]

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from: *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 297.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

On the same note, he treated Christians and Jews who accepted Islām in the same way that he treated Muslims, while working towards narrowing, or rather, breaking the disharmony between them, stating: "If a Christian, Jew or Zoroastrian among the people of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) embraces Islām from today onwards, then let him share the domain of the Muslims and differentiate the domain that he was previously in, for he is entitled to the same as the Muslims, just as what is upon them is also upon him. They are thereby obliged to allow him to mix freely and treat him equally."(1) Ibn Sa'ad narrates that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made the 'Arabs and their non-Arab partisans equal in terms of livelihood, maintenance, aid and grants, while he granted an entitlement of twenty-five *Dīnār* to a manumitted slave.(2)

In the domain of the judiciary and Islāmic legal practice, suffice it to say that 'Umar was a symbol of struggle in the face of the judge, as described in the following story. A man from Egypt went to see 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Verily, 'Abd al-'Azīz – referring to 'Umar's father – took my land illicitly." 'Umar asked: "Where is your land, O 'Abdullah?" "Hilwān", he replied and so 'Umar said: "I know the head of proprietors there. He will arbitrate between us." Accordingly, 'Umar went to the arbitrator who ruled against him, which brought 'Umar to say: "We disbursed money for it." The judge said: "That covers its yield. We have recovered the

Ḥakm, p. 81.

(1) *Ibid*, p.79.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/375).

likes of your expenditure." 'Umar said: "If you pass verdicts like this, I would never charge myself with a matter", and he returned all his property to him.[1]

'Umar would attach a lot of weight to the principle of equality between Muslims, even in general matters, such as his urging the people to supplicate and pray for others. He wrote to the Commander of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia), saying: "It has reached me that some narrators have created a prayer for their leaders. Rightly return it to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by passing by the narrators and ordering them to pray specifically for the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that their supplication is for the Muslims and Believers in general."[2] The importance 'Umar placed on equality extended to the practice of supplication, not pertaining just to anyone, but for the Muslims in general, as Allāh, the Sublime, is Most Worthy of asking.[3]

He practiced equality between himself and the general public. It had reached him that a man from al-Madīnah had insulted him for some reason or another, but in keeping with his firm principles, 'Umar did not charge him above what he might have charged him with, had the insulted man

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Compensating the Victims of Injustice], p. 298.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 273.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 299.

been an ordinary person from the *Ummah*. That is what happened in the case in which a man was convicted in the *Masjid* (Mosque) of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for cutting off the prayer of Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad bin Ḥazm, 'Umar's Governor of al-Madīnah at the time, and drawing his sword on him. As a result, Abū Bakr wrote to 'Umar and upon receiving 'Umar's reply, the letter was read out before them and within the contents of what was said, 'Umar had used abusive language towards the letter and the person it mentioned in it. In view of that, Abū Bakr understood it to mean that he should execute the man and so he wrote back to 'Umar to inform him that he had resolved to execute the man who had cursed him, concerning which 'Umar replied: "If you kill him, your killing is on your own hands, for he did not kill anyone. As for cursing someone, was the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon) not insulted as well? Once you receive my letter, imprison him to protect the Muslims from his evil, implore him to repent, and if he does then let him be on his way."(1)

It was not enough for 'Umar alone to adopt the principle of equality, he would further exhort his officials and governors to do likewise. To the Governor of al-Madīnah, he wrote: "Go out to the people and make peace between them in the councils and in public. No man is to have more influence with you than another and do not give special mention to the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* as from now onwards, everyone is equal

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 142.

in my eyes. In fact, I now have more reason to suspect the family of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* of subjugating the people for my deeming them equal."[1] These are but a view compelling examples verifying 'Umar's stance on the principle of equality within his state.[2]

Freedom within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's State:

Freedom constituted a fundamental principle at the foundation of 'Umar's governorship, which he carried out with trust and in assurance of all general freedoms of the people within the boundaries of Islāmic *Shar'īah* (Law) without contradicting it. As part of his concern for human freedom, he would inspect the types of freedoms practiced within the state and it so happened that upon his disapproval of certain Islāmic teachings, he decided to return them to the fold of Islāmic teachings he considered appropriate and correct. To elucidate more specifically on the freedoms revived by 'Umar within his state, the following categories can be discerned:

Intellectual and Religious Freedom:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz advocated promoting the principle of freedom of faith and belief within society and his policy

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/343); *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 301.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 301.

with regard to Christians and Jews was complied with loyalty of covenants and agreements, establishing justice for them, alleviating injustice, and non-compulsion or suppression of their beliefs and religion, stemming from the saying of Allāh, the Sublime: "*There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in 'Tāghūt' ('all false deities') and believes in Allāh, and then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allāh is the All-Hearer, Allāh Knower*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:256)

'Umar opened the channels for *Da'wah* (calling to Islām) with the kings of India and other nations and tribes outside the fold of Islām, which shall be alluded to in greater detail later on, by the permission of Allāh. In this regard, 'Umar did not force any Christian or any other non-believer into accepting Islām, but instead he urged freedom of thought in terms of opinion and expression. He exerted great effort in running his state and guiding his officials and subjects so much so that he allowed every claimant to put forth their complaints of injustice and exercise the freedom of speech. In fact, people were free to say whatever they wanted under 'Umar's rule, as we know from the statement of al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq who declared: "Today, everyone who did not used to speak now speaks."[1] Of course, this was permitted where it did not violate Islāmic Law.

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5/344).

Political Freedom:

By the same token, 'Umar promoted the resumption of political freedom that had been granted by Islām to Muslims, provided that it did not involve the disobedience of creation to the Creator, even if he was a leader or governor. From the first day of his rule, 'Umar declared the freedom to enjoin good and forbid evil, which the people had previously been denied under former oppressive regimes even though Islām does not condone remaining silent in the face of injustice. One day, 'Umar addressed the people and said: "Is surrendering to a man not in contradiction of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition)? There is no obedience to creation in disobedience to Allāh, while you call the one who flees from oppression disobedient, when in fact the former is only disobedient in the face of the oppressor."[1]

Proof that 'Umar afforded people the right of political freedom can be seen from the first steps he took following the announcement of his succession to the caliphate when he chose to disown the caliphate and demanded the people to appoint a caliph for themselves instead. Political freedom came into view in two instances: the first with the participation of the people in choosing the leader via the *Ahl al-Ḥall wa al-'Aqd* (lit. "The People of Decision and Power) concerning the Muslim's oath of allegiance and their satisfaction with

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 240.

it; secondly, with the expression of opinion and advice to the leader, whereby all actions were checked by Islāmic standards and criteria.[1] In both instances, 'Umar exercised complete political freedom to the extent that he allowed the people to appoint him to the caliphate at their own discretion before advising and exhorting to them.[2] This will be clarified further on a more appropriate note.

Personal Freedom:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz worked to achieve and uphold personal freedom for individuals of the Islāmic *Ummah* in cases where there appeared to be some constraints in making *Hijrah* (Islāmic Migration), or what is known as the freedom of movement, i.e. to come and go as one pleases. Thus, he took measures to open up the door of *Hijrah* to whoever wanted it, about which he said: "As for *Hijrah,* we open the door to whoever migrates, sells his livestock and moves from the domain of his people to the domain of *Hijrah* and the domain of fighting against our enemies. Whoever does that emulates the *Muhājirīn* (Migrants) concerning what Allāh bestowed upon them."[3] In a similar fashion, he wrote to his officials: "Open up the door of *Hijrah* to the people of

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(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 312.

(2) *Ibid,* p. 212.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 79.

Islām."[1] That was ‘Umar's stance on the freedom to perform *Hijrah,* that is, in relation to the freedom of movement. His concern for personal freedom stemmed from his recognition of his role as caliph and that the welfare and rights of his subjects rested on his shoulders and ability to grant them. Personal freedom also allowed ‘Umar's confidantes to keep him in check on whether he should pursue or refrain from a matter. Of course, this required complete personal freedom, which ‘Umar persistently urged.[2] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm relates: "Umar chose his close confidantes, to whom he said: ‘I have been burdened with an affair that has engaged me with you. Therefore whoever among you chooses to be freed from it, I free you and whoever chooses to stick by it, I have nothing for you’. At that point, the people began to cry hysterically in despair of him."[3]

Freedom of Trade and Commerce:

As for freedom of trade and gain and seeking Allāh's favour on the land and sea, which ties in with economic freedom, ‘Umar stressed the necessity of granting people the freedom to invest their wealth and the commercialisation of fair trade on land and sea. Thus, he wrote to his officials:

(1) *Ibid,* p. 78.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p. 310.

(3) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 121.

"It is in obedience to Allāh Who revealed in His Book to call all people to Islām (...) and to allow people to pursue their wealth on land and sea without restriction or imprisonment."[1] He also wrote: "As for the sea, it is likened to land, as Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*Allāh, it is He Who has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His Command, and that you may seek of His bounty and be thankful*] (*al-Jāthiyyah*,45:12). Therefore, whoever wishes to trade therein is permitted and it is not for us to intervene between one person and another, since both land and sea belongs to Allāh Who granted them for the utilisation of His servants to seek out His Favour. How then can we interfere between Allāh's servants and their sustenance?"[2] In another letter, he wrote: "Open up the bridges and passages for the people to traverse without paying a toll", as the untrustworthy delegates would defy orders by introducing unauthorised fines and fees.[3] As for rates and price fixing during 'Umar's time, Abū Yūsuf said: "'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Shawbān informed us that his father said: 'I said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Why is it that the price of things is high during your time while they were lower under former governments?' He answered: "The people before me used to compel the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* to pay beyond their means and capacity until it appeared that they possessed nothing to sell and their livelihood had been smashed to pieces. I do not burden anyone with more than

(1) *Ibid*, p. 94.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 98.

(3) *Al-Idārat al-Islāmiyyah* [Islāmic Management] by Muḥammad Kurd, p. 105.

they can bear'. As such, a man was free to sell his goods at the price that he wanted and so I said: "Would you not rather fix the price?" 'Umar replied: "The price of something has nothing to do with us, only Allāh."[1]

'Umar strictly cracked down on the sale of prohibited goods and forbade dealing in them, such as alcohol which he made impermissible to Muslims – both the consumption and dealing of it – due to its illegality under Islāmic Law and the harmful effects drinking it has on the blood and because it leads to the consumption of unlawful money, i.e. obtained through unlawful means.[2] 'Umar would say: "Whoever we find drinking a substance after we have already approached him concerning it, we will impose a penalty on his wealth and person and make an exemplary punishment out of him for others."[3]

'Umar's policy on restoring rights and reviving the spirit of disciplined commercial and economic freedom flourished and bore abundant fruits in the form of a massive influx of business and trade initiatives and the removal of the barriers that had proved to hinder such activities. Inevitably, this led to the growth of trade and consequently a rise in the total yield of income submitted as *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms), which by its very nature, through the redistribution of wealth into society, led to a rise in the quality of life at the level of

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 48.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 103.

the lower social classes. Not only did this further enhance spending power, but accordingly the consumption of goods and utilisation of services increased, which meant demand and supplyimproved; the outcome of all of this was economic rejuvenation, an enhanced quality of life at the different levels and enriched prosperity.(1)

Notably, freedom within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's state was warranted and sustained, in addition to having limitations and boundaries. It was because of this that society flourished and advanced towards progress whereby freedom was a basic right for every member of society to enjoy self-determination and the actualisation of capabilities, whilst the negation of freedom from society renders it void of one of its most important components and leaves it members lifeless. On the other hand, Islām represents an internal radiance that ingrains within the human self its connection to Allāh, the Sublime, and thereby elevates that person to a higher, venerated station until he or she becomes thirsty to do good deeds and hastens towards seeking Allāh, the Lord of Earth and Heavens. Thus, freedom within Islāmic society was one of the pillars most brilliantly realised within 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's state that served to reflect its light on the pages of time.(2)

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(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48; *Siyāsat al-itifāq al-'Ām fīl-Islām* [The Policy on Public Spending in Islām] by 'Awf Muḥammad al-Karāwī, p. 372.

(2) *Al-Mujtam'a al-Islāmī* [Islāmic Society] by Muḥammad Abū 'Ajwah, p. 245.

Part III

His Most Important Traits and Characteristics of Revival

His Most Important Traits:

The charismatic and impressive personality of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz has been described as possessing qualities of a righteous leader, the most prominent of which include: his firm belief in Allāh and His Greatness; his belief in Divine pre-ordainment; his fear of Allāh; his extensive knowledge; his trust in Allāh; his good example, honesty, competence, courage, chivalry and asceticism; his love and acceptance of advice; his humility, clemency and patience; his superior motives and resoluteness; his strong management, justice and problem solving abilities; his ability to plan, direct, coordinate and monitor – and the list of outstanding traits goes on. Due to the blessed qualities granted to him by Allāh, he was able to undertake a project of reformation and by doing so revive the characteristics of the rightly guided caliphate that had unfortunately become extinct amid the mordacious

monarchies. 'Umar was able to overcome many barriers in the course of his journey that crowned his matchless efforts with spectacular results at the level of the individual, society and state. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's program of revival and reform constituted a beacon of light for those in pursuit of the glory of Islām. Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī emulated the steps of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz during his era and was thereby able to achieve great success for the *Ummah* (Community of the Faithful) in its struggle against the Crusaders by the Grace of Allāh. Shaykh Abī Ḥafṣ 'Umar Muḥammad al-Khiḍr (d. 570 AH), a teacher of Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī, later compiled a biography on the life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz for Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī to strive to model himself on. The most outstanding qualities embodied by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz are listed as follows:

His Profound Fear of Allāh, the Sublime:

What distinguished 'Umar the most and stimulated his every endeavor was nothing but his sound faith in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), his awe of Allāh and his earnest longing for *Jannah* (Paradise) that allowed him to excel in protecting people, notwithstanding his youth, power, freedom and authority, that is, away from the strong material allurements, temptations of the *Shayṭān* (Satan) and covetousness of the self. He imposed strict discipline on himself and stood firm on the straight path.[1] His yearning for *Jannah* was so great

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.140.

that his actions were influenced more by the *Ākhirah* than the *Dunyā* (World) in giving testimony to the verse: [*O my people! Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter is the home that will remain forever]* (*Ghāfir,* 40:39).

Thus, 'Umar fully embodied his sound *Fiṭrah* (innate sound disposition) and correct doctrine of belief that, for the Muslim, the *Ākhirah* is of greater importance than the *Dunyā*. In his letter to Yazīd bin al-Muhallab, 'Umar wrote: "If my desire lay in the acquisition of wives and gaining money, He Who has granted me those things has not granted better to any of His creation. However, I am fearful of the Day when I will be held to strict account for what I have been afflicted with, which is a great affair except for what Allāh exempts me from and shows me mercy upon."[1] Concerning his profound fear of Allāh, 'Umar's wife, Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik, said: "He did not pray or fast more than anyone else but, by Allāh, I never saw anyone more fearful of Allāh than 'Umar. He would invoke Allāh while lying in his bed, shivering like a bird shaking off water out of utter fear, to the point that we would say that the people would not have a caliph in the morning."[2] Makḥūl also said: "If I swore to something it meant I truly believed it and I never saw anyone more ascetic or more fearful of Allāh

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.140.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

than 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."[1] Because of this inherent fear within him, 'Umar would frequently cry and was very easily prone to crying, for instance, a man once entered upon him while 'Umar was lighting a stove, at which point 'Umar said: "Admonish me." The man replied: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! How will *Jannah* benefit you after you have already entered the *Nār* (Fire) and how harmful entering the *Nār* will be to you after you have entered *Jannah*!" 'Umar then cried until his tears extinguished the fire in front of him.[2] In awe of the Day of Judgment, he would supplicate to Allāh and say: "O Allāh! If you know that I fear something other than the Day of Judgment then do not believe my fear in it."[3] It was that particular Day that 'Umar's entire life revolved around and it was about that Day that 'Umar used to say: "You have concerned yourself with an affair that if I were to concern myself with, the stars would fall and be scattered, the mountains would turn to dust and the earth would be cleft asunder. Do you not know that there is no station between *Jannah* and the *Nār,* and that you will be going to either one of them?"[4]

'Umar's outlook on life was absolutely clear, his consciousness centred on immortality, his emotions were influenced by the Day of Reckoning and he was motivated by his view of Heaven and Hell. These things are embedded within those who hold themselves to account and causes them

(1) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 221.
(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 90.
(3) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 224.
(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 232.

to tremble from fear at the thought of stepping a single foot out of place regarding what Allāh wants.(1) When a leader's consciousness and emotions, in addition to other faith-based characteristics, are all directed at the Day of Judgment, he does not take one step, say one word or carry out any action without it being linked to Allāh, the Majestic. It is important to stress, of course, that these characteristics and traits can in no way be afforded due justice by a modern study on leadership in its understanding of the root of leadership success. The most important characteristics of leadership are in fact the characteristics of the leader, in which case 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had firm faith in Allāh and the Day of Judgment fuelled by a consuming fear and trepidation.(2)

Asceticism:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz dedicated his life to understanding the Qur'ān and studying the guidance laid down by the Trustworthy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that led him to assume to attitude that the world of this life was but a test and trial as the testing grounds of the *Ākhirah*. For this reason, 'Umar was liberated from the trappings, adornment and glitter of the *Dunyā* in favour of a life of submission and commitment to his Lord both outwardly and inwardly. He was thereby able to arrive at certain truths

(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 45.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.142.

firmly established within his heart that facilitated a life of asceticism in this world. These truths were:

Complete Certainty of Who We Are:

In this world, we are but strangers and visitors passing on our way, as the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Be in this world as though are you are strangers and wayfarers."[1]

This is the Dunyā (World):

It has no weight or value in the Sight of the Magnificent Lord except that it requires obedience to Allāh, Glorified is He, as the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "If the value of the world was made equal to that of the wing of a mosquito by Allāh, He would not have allowed any *Kāfir* (Disbeliever) even a drink of water from it."[2]

The End is Near:

The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The time between my being sent and the Hour is like the gap between the index and middle fingers."[3]

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(1) *Kitāb az-Zuhd* [The Book of Asceticism] by at-Tirmidhī, p. 2333; an authentic narration.

(2) *Kitāb az-Zuhd* [The Book of Asceticism] by at-Tirmidhī, p. 2320.

(3) *Kitāb al-Fitan wa Ashrāṭ as-Sā'ah* [The Book of Trials and the Portents of the Hour] by Muslim, no. 132-5.

The Ākhirah (Hereafter) is Everlasting:

Due to his understanding of issues such as these, 'Umar lived a life of asceticism in the *Dunyā* (World). Asceticism begins with the abstention of *Harām* (prohibitions), followed by the abstention of *Mubāḥ* (the permitted things), and the highest form of asceticism is to cut oneself off from all favour and possessions.[1] The asceticism of 'Umar of bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was built upon the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), which led him to abandon everything that did not benefit his *Ākhirah*. Hence, he did not rejoice at his existence as being caliph and he was not upset by losing out on worldly matters. He abandoned everything that preoccupied his attention with attaining the pleasure of this world over what was better for the *Ākhirah* and he desired what Allāh, the Majestic, had to offer him.[2] Mālik bin Dīnār said: "The people are saying that Mālik bin Dīnār is an ascetic, while the ascetic is definitely 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who was given the entire world but disowned it."[3] Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm said: "When 'Umar ascended to the caliphate, he became an ascetic in the *Dunyā* by rejecting everything in it, included colourful dishes to the extent that if someone prepared a dish for him he would set it aside and cover it until he was hungry for it, after which he would eat it."[4] Thus, his only interest in food was to feed

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.148.

(2) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz]* (1/146).

(3) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/257).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-

his hunger and sustain his body, as we can see from what he used to spend to feed his family as narrated by Sālim bin Ziyād who said: "'Umar used to spend just two *Dirhams* on dinner and supper for him and his family."[1]

As for attire, he would only wear ragged clothes and abandoned the showy apparel of haughtiness and arrogance that consumed his forebears, which is why he ordered that they be sold and their yield be deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) for the Muslims.[2] Hence, he returned all maidservants and slaves to their rightful owners in cases where they had been seized unlawfully, whilst distributing more slaves among the blind and disabled, all of which formed part of his battle against opulence and extravagance.[3]

With regards to the asceticism he practiced in relation to marital relations, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm narrates: "His wife, Fāṭimah, said that he had not performed *Ghusl* (ritual cleansing after sexual intercourse) since he was appointed to the caliphate to the time that he met with Allāh except for three times." It has also been said that he did not perform *Ghusl* right up to his death.[4] These accounts contradict what is popularly known of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his ardent love and observance

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Ḥakm, p. 43.

(1) *Ibid,* p. 38.

(2) *Al-Āthār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz [The Mark of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz]* (1/155).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 50.

of the guidance of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is disqualified that he (may Allāh have mercy on him) abandoned the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) by oppressing his wives and not granting them their rights (to marital relations), for if he did leave his wives and abstain from them, this has no relationship with the Islāmic asceticism that was revealed to us by our Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who played an active role within Muslim society. There are some deviant sects who advocate such practices as constituting Islāmic asceticism, on the topic of which they tell many stories that have no logical link to Islām. Their teachings are strange and absurd, to give a few examples:

- Abstention from women and food, which is necessary to show honour
- Whoever marries has allowed the *Dunyā* (World) to enter his house and so they warn against marrying altogether
- A man does not attain the status of the honest and righteous until he leaves his wife as though she were a widow, his children as though they were orphans and seeks refuge in the *Manāzil* (recitation of certain verses of the Qur'ān for protection)
- Whoever is accustomed to the thighs of women will never prosper
- Whoever marries bows down to the *Dunyā*[1]

Ridiculous and outlandish concepts such as these are

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by ash-Sha'rānī (1/34).

incongruous with Islām, which is a religion of moderation and balance. Thus, the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever deviates from my *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) is not part of me.”(1) To sum up, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz adhered to the Book and *Sunnah* in his observance of asceticism and that many contradictory claims that have implausibly been ascribed to him are unfounded and incorrect based on their inconsistency with the guidance of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

When it came to saving money, ‘Umar’s attitude was contrary to the occupiers of office in our current day. Upon his succession to the caliphate, ‘Umar owned forty-thousand *Dīnār,* while he died owning just four hundred *Dīnār,* if not less.(2) Not a single penny of his salary and expenses came out of the Muslim *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury).(3) In view of these things, ‘Umar was one of the greatest ascetics of his age. He would say: “Indeed, the *Dunyā* does not gladden inasmuch as it harms, it seldom gladdens and dismays a lot.”(4) The renowned Shaykh Abū Ḥafṣ, ‘Umar bin Muḥammad al-Khiḍr, mentions ‘Umar’s asceticism on approximately twenty-eight different occasions,(5) which gives testimony that

(1) *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* [The Grant of the Creator] consistent with al-Bukhārī’s *Saḥīḥ* [Authentic Narrations] (9/104).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/257).

(3) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 186.

(4) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p.151.

(5) *Kitāb al-Jāmi‘ li-Sīrat ‘Umar bin;Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd

'Umar reached an advanced level of asceticism and bore the characteristics of the ascetics. It is fair to say that the elite of our day would never be able to even come near to 'Umar's disdain and rejection of the material things of this world, despite the fact they ultimately oppress their owners in aspects of life and tie them down to their belongings. People then begin to measure each other by what they own of the world's rubble, whereby we only have to look at the leaders and heads of our materialistic age to see an adequate example of people who in no way bear the characteristics of asceticism. Instead, they satisfy themselves through greed and avariciousness and even as they strive to make *Halāl* (lawful) earnings, they work in subjection to their worldly desires thinking they might attain a station more superior than this world, that 'Umar exerted himself to attaining, namely, the Gardens of Bliss.[1]

In conclusion to what we have to say on the topic of 'Umar's asceticism and its impact on his leadership, he once said to his slave, Mazāḥim: "I positively pine for *Ḥajj* (the Major Pilgrimage to Makkah), so do you own anything?" Mazāḥim answered: "About ten *Dīnār*." He said: "Then what will I do?" So Mazāḥim remained silent for a while and then he said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Prepare yourself as seventeen thousand *Dīnār* has been brought to us from the money of the *Banī* Marwān." 'Umar said: "Put it in the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) and if it is permissible for us, we would only take

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al-'Azīz] (1/366-78).

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.151.

what is enough for us and if it is not permissible for us, our affliction is sufficient for us." So Mazāḥim said that when 'Umar saw me with the money, he burdened me with it by saying: "Woe unto you, O Mazāḥim! Nothing is enhanced for you except that Allāh put it there. If I have an acquisitive soul, it will no longer desire status. Therefore, if it is inclined to pursue something more venerable, it might attain a high status on the Day of Judgment after which there will be no other status. In that case, today is spent in pursuit of *Jannah* (Paradise)."[1]

Humility:

Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*And the (faithful) slaves of the Most Gracious (Allāh) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness)* (*al-Furqān,* 25:63). Ibn al-Qayyim states: "This means to walk quietly and to esteem the humble."[2] The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Be humble so that no one will boast over another and so that no one transgresses over another."[3] This noble quality was one of the basic traits distinctly embodied by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz whose asceticism produced refined humility, given that a condition of true asceticism is to be humble before

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 62.

(2) *Madārij as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (2/340).

(3) Muslim, no. 2865.

Allāh.[1] Actually, ‘Umar showed humility in all his affairs and interactions as is required of a leader who fears Allāh, longs for Him and expects obedience and loyalty from his subjects.[2] Among the many things that illustrate ‘Umar’s humility is the response he once gave to a man who shouted at him: ‘O *Khalīfatullah fil-Arḍ* (Caliph of Allāh on the Earth)!” So ‘Umar said to him: “On the contrary! When I assumed the caliphate, my people chose to call me by my name: ‘Umar. If you had called out: ‘O ‘Umar!’ I would have answered you. When I designated myself an epithet, I chose to be called Abū Ḥafṣ. Had you called out: ‘O Abū Ḥafṣ!” I would have answered you. Had you called me *Amīr al-Mu’minīn* (Commander of the Believers), I would have answered you then. But as for *Khalīfatullah fil-Arḍ,* I am not that, as the Caliphs of Allāh on the Earth were Dawūd (David) (may peace be upon him), the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the like”,[3] referring to the statement of Allāh: [*O Dawūd (David)! Verily, We have placed you as a successor on the earth]* (*Ṣād,* 38:26)

A reflection of his humility can be seen in the fact that he used to prevent the people from standing for him, saying: “O company of people! If you stand when we stand and sit when we sit, it should be that people only stand for the Lord of the Worlds.” He would say to his bodyguards: “Do not put

(1) *‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* by az-Zahīlī, p. 105

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz], p.152.

(3) *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 46

my safety first, for it is us that should be keeping you safe."[1] 'Umar showed humility even towards his lamp. One night, some people were spending the night with him when his lamp died out and so he stood up to fix it. It was said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Can we not help you?" He answered: "Is it harming me? Anyway, it is not good for a man to let his guests do something for him. I stand up while I am 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and I sit down while I am 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."[2] On another occasion, he said to his maidservant one day: "O maid, come and fan me." So she got up and began to fan him but while she was doing that she became drowsy and fell asleep. Alarmed by her reddened face and the sweat pouring off her, 'Umar began to fan her but when she woke up, she was so startled at what she saw that she put her hands over her face and began to scream. However, 'Umar calmly said to her: "You are only human like me; and you were caught by heat the same way I was, and I wanted to fan your face in the same way that you fanned mine."[3]

He would abstain from talking a lot, despite that he was an eloquent and articulate scholar for fear that he would appear vain and self-important. A man once entered upon him and said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* The caliphate decorated your predecessors, while you decorate the caliphate, like the saying of the poet:

"If pearl had decorated the beauty of necks,

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 34-5.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 39.

(3) *Akhbār* Abī Ḥafṣ [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajrī, p. 86.

Then your beautiful face has decorated the pearl itself."

Thereafter, 'Umar kept away from that man.[1] On another occasion, a man said to him: "May Allāh reward you greatly for Islām." 'Umar replied: "On the contrary! May Allāh reward Islām greatly for me."[2] A man once entered upon 'Umar and a room full of people and said: "Peace be upon you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!*" 'Umar replied: "May your peace prevail."[3] That was the personality of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* who would so humbly lower his wing to the believers and never show arrogance towards a servant of Allāh. His caliphate did not flourish except through humility, clemency and mercy and he did not occupy the position of Caliph except through an unassuming nature and out of submission to the authority of the truth. Thus, he would fix his own lamp, sit on the floor with the people, refuse to have the guards and police from walking in front of him, rebuke those who praised him, grace those in his company with greetings of peace, and he would not allow for people to be discriminated on the grounds of their mounts, food, clothes or drink.[4]

Piety:

Piety was certainly one of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's discernable traits whereby he would abstain from doing what

(1) *Ibid*, p. 84.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/147); *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5/331).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/384).

(4) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 123.

was harmful. Moreover, 'Umar intervened in the prohibited and doubtful matters because they were harmful and whoever defends against doubtful matters safeguards his exposition and his religion, whereas those who fall into doubtful matters fall into *Harām* (prohibitions) just as a shepherd who herds on the edges of his pasture is likely to cross over it.(1) In essence, piety means to refrain from doing what is prohibited and steering clear from it, and then moving on to refraining from what is *Halāl* (lawful) and permissible. Proof of 'Umar's acclaimed piety and his exertion to safeguard himself from doubtful matters can be discerned from a narration that states that he enjoyed eating bread with honey and one day he had asked his family to get him some honey as he did not have any. A little later, they brought him the honey and he ate it and enjoyed it. He then turned to his family and asked: "Where did you get it from?" His wife answered: "I sent my servant with two *Dīnār* on Burayd's mule and he bought it for me." He asked: "Did you share it out before you gave me some?" So she bought out a vessel containing some of the honey and when he saw that the honey was worth more than two *Dīnār*, 'Umar gave his wife her money back and returned the rest of the honey to the Muslim's *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury), saying to her: "You brought harm to the livestock of the Muslims to satisfy 'Umar's appetite."(2)

To depict another illustration of his piety, one narration tells of a boy who used to bring him copper vessels filled with

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(1) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Judgments] (10/615).

(2) *Akhbār* Abī Ḥafṣ [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajrī, p. 54.

hot water in which he would perform *Wuḍhū'* (ritual ablution). One day, 'Umar said to the boy: "Do you take these vessels to the Muslims' kitchen to heat up the water and then bring them here to me?" "Yes, may Allāh make you prosper", the boy replied. 'Umar said: "Do you make it corrupt for us? Do you make it corrupt for us?!" He then ordered Mazāḥim to boil the water in the vessels and watched to see how much wood was used to complete the job. He then calculated how many days the boy had brought him water and then returned the total amount of firewood to the kitchen.(1)

A similarly example of his piety is that he would never accept gifts from any of his workers or the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) for fear that they might be considered as bribes. On the authority of 'Amr bin Muhājir who narrated: "'Umar desired an apple and said: 'If only we had an apple that was sweet in smell and taste'. At that point a man from his family stood up and sent him an apple as a gift but when the messenger arrived with it, 'Umar said: 'How lovely its smell is! Take it back, O boy, and send greetings of peace on so-and-so and say to him that his gift has been received by us as he had wished'. I said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* He is your paternal cousin and a man belonging to your own family, while you know that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to eat from the gifts he was given and not accept charity." 'Umar retorted: "Woe unto you! No doubt, those were presents for the Prophet (may

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but for me this will be bribery."[1]

He would not allow himself to even smell *misk* (musk) purchased out of the Muslim's money such that he held his nose when rich smelling *misk* was put in front of him and it was be said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* It is only a smell." He said: "It has no use other than to give off a smell!"[2] He would in this manner be extremely cautious when spending the wealth of the general Muslims so much so that he would light the lamp bought out of the *Bayt al-Māl* only when he was tending to the Muslims needs, after which he would put it out and light his own personal lamp bought out of his own pocket.[3] Many historians have testified to the numerous examples of piety demonstrated by 'Umar who considered desisting from spending the smallest amount of the Muslims' wealth as refraining from doubtful matters, even though he was far from doubtful in his preservation of his religion. Three statements 'Umar applied to himself were: 1) Highlighting areas where he needed guidance so he can follow it; 2) Pointing out his faults so he can address them; and 3) practising what he preached.[4]

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 197.

(2) *Ibid,* p. 200; *Kitāb al-Wara'* [The Book of Piety] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 74.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/164).

(4) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (4/397); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/165).

Discipline:

'Umar was pious even in his speech, for instance, when it was said to him: "What do think about the people of *Siffīn*?" He answered: "Allāh has cleansed my hands of that blood so I do not like to stain my tongue with it."(1) Not only was 'Umar pious in respect to his food, needs, desires and the Muslims' wealth, but he applied piety to all aspects of his life that showed piety coupled with strong faith, feelings of responsibility and consideration for the *Ākhirah.* In keeping with his outstanding level of piety, 'Umar bought a plot of land for him to be buried in upon receiving a sum of money and thus, he did not take anything from this world, including his grave, for nothing.(2)

Clemency, Forgiveness and Mercy:

Among the many fine characteristics embodied in the personality of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was his forgiveness of others and the ability to show mercy, as a *Shaykh* (religious leader; elder) from al-Khanasser reported: "'Umar had a son by his wife Fāṭimah who went out to play with two other boys, but when he came in he had been wounded in the head by one of them. 'Umar's son was carried home to his mother and the boy who wounded him was brought with him. Upon hearing all the commotion from another house, 'Umar went outside to

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 195.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.156.

see what was happening to find his wife shouting: "He is my son and he is an orphan!" 'Umar asked: "Does he have an endowment?" "No", she replied. So 'Umar said: "Register his name in the posterity." At that point, Faṭimah exclaimed: "May Allāh send him to so and so, and let his son beat him another time!" 'Umar said: "Now you have frightened him."[1]

Ibrāhīm bin Abī 'Ablah is reported to have said: "One day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was extremely infuriated at a man and so at the spur of the moment he ordered that he be fetched, tied up with rope and for the whip to be brought. Suddenly, he said: "Let him be on his way." After a short pause, he then said: "As for me, had I not been angry I would have punished you. Allāh, the Almighty, says: [...those who repress anger and pardon men; verily Allāh loves the *Muḥsinīn* (good-doers).-] (*Āl-'Imrān,* 134) 'Abd al-Mālik said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz stood up before his audience when he saw a man holding some scrolls in his hands, which had led the people to suspect him of wanting the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Feared that he might be imprisoned for it, the man threw down his scrolls but they hit 'Umar in the face and wounded him. I later saw 'Umar standing outside in the blazing sun with blood pouring down his face and he did not move from that spot until he read the scrolls. Soon afterwards, he ordered that the man's needs be fulfilled and for him to be let on his way."[2]

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 207; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/423).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/311).

It has been narrated that a man once put forward a request to 'Umar but 'Umar did not respond to it. He was asked: "What prevents you from him?" He said: "He met with Muljam."[1] On the authority of Ḥātim bin Qadāmah, a man approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz while he was giving a sermon and said to him: "I testify that you are among the immoral." 'Umar said: "What do you know? You are a false witness and your testimony is not recognised by us."[2]

It is narrated that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the caliphate, he went out to the *Masjid* (mosque) in the middle of the night with his bodyguard. On their way, 'Umar tripped over a man who was sleeping on the floor and so the man shouted to 'Umar: "Are you crazy?" 'Umar replied" "No", at which point 'Umar's guards grabbed hold of the man but 'Umar intervened saying: "No. He only asked me if I was crazy and I said no."[3] Another narration states that a man approached 'Umar while he was on the *minbar* (pulpit) to ask him for something and so 'Umar got angry at him, saying: "O you who wished to provoke me with the *Shayṭān* (Satan) to do something to you today that I would not even consider doing tomorrow! Go and repent to Allāh for me and for you."[4] It is said that a boy who was crying went to see Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and so the latter asked: "What is the matter with

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 208.

(2) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2/424).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*

you?" He answered: "So-and-so, the slave, hit me." As such, he was brought to 'Umar who asked: "Did you hit him?" "Yes", he replied. 'Umar then said: "Go, for I never punish someone who answers honestly. Go!" and he did not speak to him.[1] Examples of 'Umar's kindness, patience and mercy are so abundant that the aforementioned accounts represent just a slight glimpse into the extent of his fine, unparalleled qualities.

Patience:

'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) was an exemplary model of patience and gratitude. It is narrated that when he died, 'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz stayed with him right up until he was placed in his grave, at which point he said: "Do not put him in too deep, as the higher part of the land is better than what is below it."[2] It is also narrated that when his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, his brother, Suhl bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, and his slave, Mazāḥim, died, a man from the people of the *Shām* (Levant) said: "By Allāh, a severe calamity has befallen the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* His son, Abd al-Mālik, has died and, by Allāh, I never saw a son be of more use to his father than him. The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* was then afflicted by the death of his brother and, by Allāh, I never saw a brother be of more use to his brother than him." He then remained silent at the mention of Mazāḥim and so 'Umar said: "Do not leave Mazāḥim out, as, by Allāh, he was not the lowest of the three in my sight. May Allāh have mercy on you, O Mazāḥim! May

(1) *Ibid*.
(2) *Ibid* (2/427).

Allāh have mercy on you, O Mazāḥim! By Allāh, I was granted much of this *Dunyā* (World) and you were the finest minister in the affairs of the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter)."[1]

Hafṣ bin 'Umar said: "When 'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz died, he father began to praise him at his grave and so Maslamah said: 'Do you think that you would have appointed him to the caliphate if he had lived?" He said: "No." Maslamah said: "But you are praising him with such praises." He said: "It is because I fear that he might exalt me out of love as a father exalts his son out of love."[2] In one of his sermons, 'Umar stated: "Nobody is afflicted with a calamity and says: 'To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return' except that Allāh compensates him with something better than what was taken from him." He went on to say: "Satisfaction is scarce and patience is the pillar of the believer." He also said: "He who acts without knowledge causes more corruption than good, and he who does not consider his speech to be part of his actions sins repeatedly. Satisfaction is scarce, and the true believer should rely on his patience. Allāh never bestowed a blessing upon one of His servants and then took it away from him, giving him patience in return for that which was taken away, except that the replacement was better than what was taken away from him."[3] 'Umar showed great patience throughout his life for the sake of the caliphate, about which he would say: "By Allāh, I did not assume this position of mine

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid* (2/428).

(3) *Ibid.*

except out of fear that someone might establish it against the people's wishes and that my obedience in what I do would deliver to it what it deserves, i.e. the caliphate. Therefore, I am patient until Allāh decrees His will or grants some victory."(1)

Resoluteness:

'Umar possessed resoluteness and certainty long before he applied it to the affairs of the Muslims and the caliphate, but he best conveyed these qualities in connection with the governors and heads of state. His ability to be decisive, control situations and his firmness to not disregard what he thought was necessary for the general welfare and in the interests of the Muslims took on many forms and applied in all circumstances, for instance, his decisiveness with the Umayyad nobles and commanders and those who wanted to drive a wedge between the Muslims, spread *fitnah* (trials; discord), spill blood, and so forth. The prime indicator of his strict resolution emerged when taking his stance with the Umayyad family to whom he said: "Hand over what you possess and do not seek refuge in me over what I hate, or I will cause you to do what you hate." None of them responded, however, and so he said: "Say something", at which point a man among them said: "By Allāh! We will not surrender the money that was given to us by our fathers so as to afflict out children with poverty and accuse our fathers of infidelity until you take off our heads!" 'Umar remarked: "By Allāh, had you

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.144.

not sought my help in what I have rightfully demanded of you, I would have humiliated you and abased your faces at an instant. However, if I did not fear that *Fiṭnah* (trials; discord) would ensue, I would seize and grant everyone his right, by the will of Allāh."[1]

'Umar always took care of matters, for example, he received a letter from the *Banī* Marwān (tribe) one day that made him swell with anger. He then said: "Verily, a day [or it said, a slaughter] will come to the *Banī* Marwān (tribe) on which I will turn to Allāh, as that slaughter will be carried out by my own hands!" When they heard he had said that, they stopped in their tracks as they were aware of 'Umar's rigidity and that if he said he was going to do something, it meant he would do it.[2]

As for those who tried to create discord between the Muslims and rebel against them, 'Umar adopted a strategy of dialogue and discussion. These rebels were specifically the *Kharijites* who revolted against the Umayyad family under the leadership of the *Kharijite* named Shawdhab in the year 100 AH. Thus, 'Umar aimed to supress what they were pushing for by showing them that if they had a right to their claims, he would take them into account, otherwise they would have to agree to join the rest of the people. At that particular time, 'Umar's measures showed resoluteness and rigidity in the face of bloodshed and corruption, whereupon he wrote to his

(1) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (5/173).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.158.

official over 'Irāq, saying: "Do you take action until they have spilled blood or caused corruption on the earth? If they do that then look for a good, decisive man to mediate between them and send an army with him after having entrusted him with what I have ordered him to do herein."(1) This was how 'Umar acted with decisiveness, that is, by taking strict measures and stances even in sensitive matters carrying significant repercussions. Nevertheless, 'Umar would play a positive and indispensable role in smoothing out matters and executing what he strived to accomplish of justice, harmony and the marks of a rightly-guided caliphate.(2)

Justice:

At the top of all 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's outstanding traits and qualities was definitely his phenomenal ability to be just and execute justice throughout his state with such vigour and sincerity that the scholars unanimously agreed, and continue to agree, that he was one of the "*Imām*s of Justice", "Rightly-Guided Caliphs" and an "*Imām Mahdī*" (Guided Leader)."(3) Perhaps 'Umar's prime motive for being just was rooted in his belief that justice was one of Allāh's universal laws and in his utter certainty that justice was a fruit among the fruits of faith and a characteristic of the believers who cherished the laws of

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(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabarī* (7/459).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.163.

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p.163.

truth. It might have also stemmed from 'Umar's longstanding desire to suppress the injustice suffered by the people under former Umayyad caliphates and governors. Most of all, one of the most important reasons for 'Umar's eagerness to observe that justice was being carried put was because Allāh commands that justice and righteousness be done and that these form the general foundations for legislating the divine laws and injunctions.

As his love for the spread of Islām grew so did his love for justice and the revival of its values,[1] as can be seen from the following example of his just character that additionally sheds a vivid light on all the previous allusions to the character of this fine man. A *Dhimmī* (non-Muslim man living under Muslim rule) from Ḥimṣ (ancient Emesa, city in central Syria) approached 'Umar and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* May I ask you about the Book of Allāh, the Majestic?" "What about it?" He asked him. He replied: "al-'Abbās bin al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik violated my land", while al-'Abbās was sitting there and so 'Umar turned to him and said: "O 'Abbās! What do you have to say?" He answered: "I was allotted it by al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik who wrote down the deeds to it for me." So 'Umar said: "The Book of Allāh is more worthy of being followed than the deeds of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Therefore, return his loss to him, O 'Abbās" and he did.[2]

Al-Ḥakm bin 'Umar ar-Ra'īnī testifies to 'Umar's stance

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], pp.163-4.

(2) *Akhbār* Abī Ḥafṣ [An Exposition of Abī Ḥafṣ] by al-Ajrī, p. 58.

on justice, saying: "I witnessed Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik provoking the inhabitants of Diyar Isḥāq at the time when 'Umar was in an-Nā'ūrah (situated 8 miles from Aleppo), on which occasion 'Umar said to Maslamah: "You do not recline on cushions and your opponents are here in front of me, however, assign whichever one of your opponents you like otherwise the people will kneel at my discretion." As such, he appointed a slave of his to be his opponent and their dispute was settled in an-Nā'ūrah.[1] Of course, these are but a few of the many examples taken from the books written specifically on the subject of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's justice.

Invoking and Supplicating to Allāh and Receiving an Answer to His Prayers:

'Umar would supplicate and invoke Allāh profusely. Of the many things he would say was: "O Lord! You created me and shall cause me to die. You made a promise to me of reward for what you enjoined on me and threatened me with punishment for what you forbade me. You gave me mastery over an enemy, calmed my chest and allowed my blood to flow through my veins. Indeed, the most severe offense allures me and the most righteous action frustrates me, yet they will not be ignored unless You ignore them and they will not be forgotten unless You forget them. Desires are set up in front of me and doubts face me and unless You deter their schemes from me I will be debased. O Allāh! Make the most triumphant authority over me Your Authority so that I

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 91.

may remember You abundantly and be among the sinless to you. There is no might or power except by You."[1] He would also say: "O Allāh! Reform the good of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). O Allāh! Destroy whoever seeks the destruction of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."[2] Another supplication he would make was: "O Allāh! Envelope me in good health until life bids me farewell, finish me off with forgiveness until no sin can harm me and ward off every fright from me in place of *Jannah* (Paradise) until I receive Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of All!"[3] He would say: "O Allāh! Certainly, I obeyed you in the most beloved of things to you and that is *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine of the "Oneness of Allāh) and I did not disobey you in the most despised of things to you and that is *Shirk* (Polytheism; Idolatry), therefore forgive me in what lies between the two."[4] Another supplication he would say was: "O Allāh! I seek refuge in you from blasphemously altering Your Favour or disbelieving in it after it has perished or forgetting it to the point that I do not commend it."[5] A supplication he would often make was: "O Allāh! Make me pleased with Your Plan and bless me in Your Decree such that I no longer love hastening something

(1) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/341).

(2) *Ibid* (1/342).

(3) *Ibid* (1/343).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 230.

(5) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/343).

You have postponed or postponing something You have hastened."[1]

Reports assert how 'Umar's supplications had been answered, for instance, Ibn al-Ḥakm narrates that Ibn ar-Rayyān had been al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's executioner and so when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the caliphate, he said: "I recall his arrogance and pride." He then said: "O Allāh! I have humiliated him for you so do not raise him up." Never had a noble lost his reputation to the point of never being mentioned like him.[2]

'Umar had been informed about the lack of water in Makkah and so prior to his entering the city while making the *Hajj* pilgrimage, he made a supplication and Allāh answered his prayer by causing it to rain. This took place at the time when he was the Governor of al-Madīnah.[3] Likewise, 'Umar supplicated for Ghīlān al-Qadrī when he saw him, saying: "O Allāh! Let Your servant, Ghīlān, be honest otherwise may he be crucified", and it happened that he was later crucified during the caliphate of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik."[4]

(1) *Ibid* (1/344).
(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 30.
(3) *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (1/183).
(4) *Ash-Sharī'ah* [Islāmic Law "] by Ājrī (1/438).

The Indicators of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Revival

Looking at the statements of the scholars and historians interested in the revivalist movement, there is no dispute that they unanimously agree on the fact that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first *Mujaddid* (Reviver; Renewer) in Islām.[1] The first person to ascribe this title to him was Imām Muḥammad bin Shihāb az-Zuhri, followed by Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal who said: "It is narrated in the *Hadīth* (Prophetic narration) that at the turn of every century Allāh will send a person to rectify the religious affairs of this *Ummah*. We saw that the *Mujaddid* of the first century was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."[2] There is no doubt that 'Umar befitted the role of the person alluded to in the *Hadīth*. He was a diligent, determined and energetic scholar who worked day and night to revive the *Sunan* (Prophetic traditions), remove any extraneous elements from Islām and restore it to purity.[3]

Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī says: "The congruity of qualities required for renewal is not confined to one type of good quality or deed and it is certainly fair to say that all good qualities have not been embodied by a single individual as they had been in the person of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, who came at the turn of the century bearing all the fine qualities

(1) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/393) by 'Aẓīm Ābādī; *Jāmi' al-Aṣūl* (11/322).

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 74.

(3) *Al-Mujaddidūn fil-Islām* [Revivers in Islām] by aṣ-Ṣa'īdī, p. 57; *Mawjiz Tārīkh* [A Concise History] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 63.

and more. Aḥmad later attributed the *Hadīth* in reference to him being the *Mujaddid* of the first century and ash-Shāfi'ī as the *Mujaddid* of the second century. While the latter was characterized by many beautiful qualities, he did not concern himself with enjoining *Jihād* and ruling with justice."[1]

While there are some scholars who are of the opinion that only the *Mahdī* (Guided One) at the end of times fully befits the person of a *Mujaddid,* and therefore do not apply this status to the likes of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who did not emerge within the Muslim *Ummah* as an "Absolute *Mujaddid*" up until the present day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz almost achieved complete renewal through his cessation of hereditary rule and revival of an elected caliph by the process of *Shūra*.[2] Whether 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz deserves to be ascribed the title of an "Absolute *Mujaddid*" or not, the revivalist reforms he made, the enormous effort he exerted to resume Islāmic life, restore its purity and clarity as it was at the time of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, places him at the head of the *Mujaddidūn* (Revivers; Renewers) who appeared over the ages until our present day. Of course, this status was helped by his position as the head of a strong, vast, extensive caliphate, which allows us to better grasp the extent of the revivalist reforms embarked on by this caliph and the renewal he brought about.

(1) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (13/295).

(2) *Mawjiz Tārīkh Tajdīd ad-Dīn* [A Brief History of the Revival of the Religion] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 69.

One could delve into the degree of deviance and perversity that had occurred within Islāmic life, or the change and transformation the Islāmic caliphate had undergone; however, we would probably not even skim the surface of the actual reality if we were only to confine the perversity of that time to the system of government from which resulted in nothing other than injustice and corruption. As for public life, the light of prophecy continued to shine and the Religion (of Islām) was the supreme authority in the hearts of the people.[1]

'Umar's Reforms and Acts of Renewal

Shūrā (Consultation):

We have already mentioned that upon 'Umar's first encounter with the people, he began by praising and glorifying Allāh, and said: "O people! I have been burdened with the responsibilities of the caliphate against my own will and without your consent. I thereby remove the oath of allegiance to me that is on your necks so that you are at liberty to elect whom you like." However, the audience cried out with one voice that he was the fittest person for the high office and said: "We have chosen you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, and we are pleased that you have blessed and honoured our good affair."[2] With the commencement of his rule, 'Umar's first act was one of renewal whereby he freed the people from the

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by an-Nadwī, p. 10.

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 65.

stifling monarchy and therefore did not force the people into accepting him. On the contrary, he put the affair in their hands by reintroducing *Shūrā* (Consultation) amongst them.[1]

Fidelity in Rule and Delegating Trustees:

There is a long list of positive evidence suggesting that 'Umar sought to attain his goal of reaching the highest station, given that he perceived the magnitude of responsibility and the weight of the burden from the moment he received the caliphate. He would say to whoever asked him why he looked sad: "Anyone in my position would feel sad. There is no one in the *Ummah* except that I want to extend his rights to him without him even writing to me about it or requesting it from me."[2] He would say: "I am not better than you, although I bear a heavier load than you do."[3]

He would demand that his agents and officials choose associates who were beneficial and religious, as whoever they delegated would be entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims. Thus, he wrote to one of his agents: "Do not charge any affair of the Muslims to anyone other than the one who is known for consulting with them, giving ample attention to them and performing loyally."[4] 'Umar's stringent fiscal policy with regards the Muslims' funds was not only a personal sentiment

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 79.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/586).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 81.

but he further enjoined it on his agents and officials. To Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, he wrote: "Use less ink and shorten the gaps between your lines, for I hate to exhaust the Muslims' funds on what is of no direct benefit to them."[1]

He placed compassionate policies on his subjects, granted them a peaceful and comfortable existence and stopped them from begging and making humiliating pleas by sharing out grants to the poor and needy.[2] To the poor of Baṣrah, he allocated thirty *Dirham* per person and he gave fifty to the chronically ill.[3] Furthermore, he commanded his officials to equip whoever wanted to perform the *Hajj* (Major Pilgrimage) duty.[4] On that subject, he wrote to his officials: "Set up inns for the Muslims who pass through your country and allow them to stay for a day or two and tend to their riding animals. Let whoever has some weakness stay for two days and two nights and if he has discontinued his journey then let him stay until he is ready to return to his country."[5] Charitable dispensaries were also opened. Even travelling expenses were arranged by the government for needy travellers.

During his time, 'Umar consolidated the availability of *Zakāh* (obligatory charity) so much so that 'Umar bin Asyad said: "By Allāh! 'Umar did not die before making it so that

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(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/595).

(2) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 81.

(3) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] (7/474).

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *Ibid* (7/472).

he would bring us a vast amount of money and say: 'Put this wherever you see fit'. It was also said about his fairness and justice to the people that if a person was to donate a large sum for the poor, his money would be returned to him untouched because nobody would be found to take it. People were satisfied in his days and it was said "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz has fulfilled the needs of the people'."[(1)] The security of the Muslims was considered far above any amount of money, concerning which 'Umar wrote to his officials: "Pay the ransoms of Muslim captives even if that exhausts all funds."[(2)]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's caliphate still constitutes historical proof for all those who doubt the possibility of the establishment of an Islāmic economic system and is a radiant example that the application of divine Islāmic *Sharī'ah* (Law) ensures people's happiness in the *Dunya* (World) and the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter).[(3)]

The Principle of Justice:

The principle of justice was of crucial importance to 'Umar, which it seems he rightly inherited from his grandfather from his mother's side, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). It is no surprise then that he had pressed onto

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/588).

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 120.

(3) *Khāmis al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidīn: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], pp. 41-2.

coins the phrase: "Allāh commands faithfulness and justice."[1] He demanded that no capital punishment be carried out on a person without his knowledge[2] whereby he wrote to his official, al-Jurāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī, the Governor of Khorasān: O son of Umm Jurāḥ! Do not kill or flog a believer except in truth and be wary of being held to account as you are going to The One Who knows the treachery from within and from Whom the heart conceals nothing. Therefore recite a book that leaves out neither the major nor the minor to be reckoned with."[3]

He acted fairly with the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) and protected them as well as their places of worship, from being attacked or violated, about which he wrote to his officials: "Do not tear down a single church, synagogue or fire-temple."[4] He lifted the *Makas* (trading taxes illegally levied during pre-Islāmic times) and removed the *'Ushūr* (import tax) and other taxes that had been imposed under former governments. As a result, he liberated the spirit of free trade on land and sea and freed it from the injustices that were being committed by the *Banī* Umayyad (tribe) and al-Hajjāj.[5]

(1) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 98.

(2) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] (7/474).

(3) *Ibid* (7/464).

(4) *Ibid* (7/477).

(5) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 107-8.

His Revival of the Principle of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil:

The caliphate was restored to serve its true purpose of guarding the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) whereby 'Umar gave impetus to this principle, raised his banner and elevated his affairs such that the Guardian and the Expediter (names of Allāh) made not only 'Umar, but equally his officials, accomplish great things out of true fear of Allāh and in seeking His pleasure in every action. One factor that helped him to be this way was the fact that he was an honourable *Tābi'ī* (second and third generation follower) and *Imām* of *Ijtihād* (independent legal ruling).[1] 'Umar bin Maymūn even went so far as to say: "The scholars and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were fellow students."[2] 'Umar's good faith and sound *'Aqīdah* (creed) had a positive impact on his reforms and renewal, as it was based on these that he was able to dispel heretic tendencies and *Bid'ah* (innovation) and act harshly in the face of falsehood,[3] which shall be elaborated on in more detail later, Allāh willing. In reference to 'Umar, Imām al-Awzā'ī says: "If you see a nation murmuring about something concerning their religion without the public, then know that they are on shaky grounds."[4] He used to think that his life would be worthless were it not utilized for reviving the *Sunnah*

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 85.
(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/518).
(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.
(4) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 83.

(Prophetic Example) or eradicating *Bid'ah* (innovation).[1]

Naturally, then, 'Umar showed a great interest in people's religion and ethics, regarding which he wrote to his officials: "Avoid being busy at the correct times for prayer, for he who loses sight of them is in the greatest loss in the sight of Islām."[2] These letters, sermons and admonitions provide the greatest insight into how he advocated strong faith, straight supervision and fear of a Day on which people will stand before the Lord of the Worlds. Consequently, 'Umar's personality and his fair policies made a sound impression the life of the public, their tendencies, mentalities and aspirations.[3] This is verified by what aṭ-Ṭabarī says in his *History* in which he compares the era of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to the eras of former rulers, stating: "Al-Walīd liked construction and manufacturing and the people of his time were the same whereby they would talk to each other about construction and manufacturing. Sulaymān next assumed the caliphate and he like food and women more, upon which the people would ask each other about marriage and female-slaves. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power, the people would meet and one man would ask another: 'What are you doing tonight? How much of the Qur'ān will you memorise? When will you complete it? How much of this month have you fasted?'"[4]

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.

(2) *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 221.

(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 86.

(4) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 87.

'Umar did not stop at establishing the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) within his state but he further directed his attention to non-Muslims who he called to enter into Islām. Thus, he sent messengers to the kings of India and beyond, promising them that they could enjoy what the Muslims enjoyed and similarly they would have the same duties as the Muslims. A large number of them subsequently chose to accept Islām and adopted the names of the Arabs.(1) Perhaps the most splendid deed 'Umar rendered in the service of Islām was the codification of the Islāmic sciences and especially the science of *Hadīth* (Prophetic Narrations). A chapter will be dedicated to this in due course, by the will of Allāh. Most importantly, all of these pivotal acts and reforms were realised throughout the brief period of 'Umar's caliphate. Thus, he became the jewel of the *Ummah* (Community of Believers) and a beacon of light guiding its recipients on the paths of renewal and reform.(2)

The Criteria and Qualities of a Mujaddid (Reviver; Renewer)

It is possible to define the fundamental criteria and qualities that should be present in the person of the *Mujaddid* that can herein be traced from the biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him).

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(1) *Khāmis al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidīn: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 30.

(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 87.

He must be known to have sound 'Aqīdah (doctrine of faith):

This is because one of the specific tasks of renewal is to restore Islām's pureness and precision from all extraneous elements. Evidently, this is an unfeasible task unless the *Mujaddid* himself is following the path of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the noble *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and the victorious sect out of an indicated seventy-three sects whose *'Aqīdah* is in keeping with the teachings and practices of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1] This condition was certainly met by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and this claim will be quantified when discussing his doctrinal impacts in this study, Allāh willing.

He must be a diligent scholar qualified to issue independent legal rulings:

This condition was realised by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who confronted the problems that arose during his time while striving to provide Islāmic legal solutions to them. In reality, the practice of *Ijtihād* (deriving independent legal rulings) is not difficult for one who has mastered some of the books of *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (the fundamentals of jurisprudence), which is why some have attempted to set conditions that are almost impossible to fulfil, such as requiring the *Mujtahid* (issuer of independent rulings) to have an all-round knowledge of all

(1) *Ibid*, p. 46.

the sciences including grammar, language and rhetoric, the Islāmic law sciences of *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic Exegesis), *Hadīth* (Prophetic Narrations) and *Uṣūl al-fiqh* (the fundamentals of jurisprudence), the sciences of the Qur'ān, the *Sīrah* (biography), speech and pronunciation, and so many more complicated stipulations.(1) While it is true that the practice of *Ijtihād* (deriving independent legal rulings) is quite easily accomplished by the perceptively competent person, it is important for us to note that the *Mujaddid* is required to have a comprehensive understanding of Islāmic law and to be capable of deducing informed rulings to apply to the prevalent circumstances as a jurist of that day and age.(2)

According to al-Manāwī: "The *Mujaddid* must be a person who stands up for the Truth, assists the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example), rejects the corrupt and innovated practices of his day, possesses the power to deduce facts and theories, and to discern criteria, guidance, proofs and requirements from an attentive heart and vigilant soul."(3) In the words of *al-'Aẓīm* Ābādī: "Indeed, a *Mujaddid* (Renewer) of the Religion is required to be knowledgeable in the religious sciences, externally and within his inner self. He assists the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and suppresses *Bid'ah* (innovation in religion)."(4) Al-Mawdūdī maintains: "Of the

(1) *Kawn al-Ma'mūd* (11/392).

(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 46.

(3) *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* by al-Manāwī (1/14).

(4) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/391); *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

specifics a *Mujaddid* is required to have are: a pure mind, acute discernment, unadulterated thinking, an exceptional capacity to demonstrate the ideal way between excess and neglect, and the observance of moderation between the two, the ability of abstract reasoning to address the current situation, and courage and bravery to confront the prevalent perversity of that time."[1] On the topic of the *Mujaddid*'s role, he states: "*Ijtihād* (issuing legal independent rulings) in the Religion." By this he means that the *Mujaddid* is required to comprehend all faculties of the Religion and give direction to the developed, urban settings of his time by way of forging a path for the introduction of expression and amending old customs to simultaneously ensure the establishment of the Islāmic spirit and the attainment of its aims. Islām is thereby perceived as a viable global system in leading an advanced and sound civilisation.

His renewal includes the field of thought and behaviour in society:

The reason for this condition is because the rectification of perversity is one of the distinctive roles a *Mujaddid* must carry out and it is a fact that perversity emerges from behaviour just as it emerges from thought. Then again, it is probably more accurate to say that most behavioural perversity is founded on intellectual perversity, which is why the *Mujaddid* rectifies ideas and concepts to decontaminate them from the

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(1) *Mawjiz Tārīkh Tajdīd ad-Dīn* [A Brief History of the Revival of the Religion] by al-Mawdūdī, p. 52.

doubt and suspicion that has crept in. Therefore, he aims to revive useful knowledge and reconciles that with the correct understanding of Islām to then disseminate it amongst the people by teaching it, authoring books and spreading it via other available means. Next, he turns to reforming behaviour in people, evaluating their morals, refining their beings, annulling any traditions in contradiction to the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic law), declaring war against *Bid'ah* (innovation), superstition, the evils rampant in people's lives, and confronting all shapes and forms of corruption, especially the corrupt leader or ruler. Thus, the *Mujaddid* combines together word and deed, knowledge and action. The predecessors elaborated on this condition further by stating that a *Mujaddid* is a person who supports the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) and subdues *Bid'ah* (innovation in religion).[1]

His benefits prevail over the people of his time:

The *Mujaddid* is a man working within a particular period and context, spanning the centuries of time, and so it is necessary then that he be a beacon of light illuminating the people and guiding them to the right way, at least until a new *Mujaddid* is sent. This means that the knowledge of the *Mujaddid* must prevail and benefit the people of his age in order that his efforts at reform and renewal leave a significant impact on their thought and behaviour. Mainly, the most prominent way to achieve this is through educating

(1) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/391); *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

them to be students and loyal companions so that they might continue on his revivalist path, publish his books, spread his ideas, establish intellectual schools and follow his footsteps in the way of reform and renewal.(1)

The Saying of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "At the turn of every century, Allāh will send a person to rectify the religious affairs of this Ummah"(2)

This *Hadīth* highlights one of the graceful ways in which Allāh preserves the *Dīn,* whatever might have accumulated over time, and Allāh guarantees His guidance and love for the *Ummah* by sending devout *Mujaddidīn* to bring it back to life again and awaken it from sleep. To the Muslim, this *Hadīth* offers definite hope for the future of Islām, no matter how bleak it may seem or how rampant the forces of evil might be, as its light will shine even in the darkest of nights.

Today, we urgently need to emphasise the meaning of this and spread it amongst the people as a means of combating the massive wave of despair and hopelessness felt by the vast majority who have given in to submissive passiveness and servitude due to the belief that it is the end of time and so there is no use in exerting any effort to renew and restore Islām, which has been left behind in

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(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 48.

(2) *Silsilat al-Aḥadīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).

place of the pervading disbelief. Additionally, it is believed that the minor signs of the Hour have become manifest and we are now awaiting the major signs that will shortly be succeeded by the establishment of the Hour. People who maintain this view refer to certain *Aḥadīth* as proof, although they interpret them to mean something other than what was intended.[1] For example, the use the *Hadīth* narrated by Anas bin Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) cited in al-Bukhārī which states: "No time will come upon you but the time following it will be worse than it until you meet your Lord."[2] Another *Hadīth* states: "Islām came as a stranger and shall return as a stranger as it began. So give glad tidings to the strangers."[3] The reality of the matter is that they forget that it is not permissible to take these *Aḥadīth* out of context without considering all the other related *Aḥadīth* that give hope and glad tidings to the *Ummah,* for instance, the *Hadīth:* "My *Ummah* is like the rain, I do not know whether the first of it is better or the last."[4] And there will be a nation apart and a time apart, as Ibn al-Qayyim mentions,[5] which explains the brilliant, gleaming periods witnessed by Islāmic history such as those of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz,[6] Nūr ad-

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 55.

(2) *Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan* [The Book of Trials], no. 6541.

(3) *Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān* [The Book of Faith], p. 208.

(4) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī,* no. 2795.

(5) *Madārij as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (3/196).

(6) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 56.

Dīn, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, Yūsuf bin Tāshifīn, Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ and others.

It is essential to point out here, then, the *Hadīth* on renewal that we seek to explain is in agreement with those *Aḥadīth* that convey the good news to the *Ummah* of the return of Islām to life. Needless to say, the information of these reports is undoubted as it was conveyed by the infallible, truthful Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Based on the certainty of what these narrations tell us, it follows that it is necessary to reawaken the Muslims to strive hard to realise the victory of Allāh for this *Dīn* and love for His people, as this is the *Sunnah* of Allāh in the scheme of cause and effect.(1)

"Allāh will send to this Ummah..."(2)

The sent one in question does not only have his own concerns but, more than that, he lives for the sake of the *Ummah* and is therefore inherently determined and resolute to address the needs of his *Ummah* in the best way he can, regardless of whether that means he does not stop day and night in order to achieve his aim of rescuing it from degradation and returning it to pure, original Islām. Patiently, he overcomes any obstacles and threats that may come in his way, for elevating his *Ummah* and restoring its glory are is ultimate objectives.(3)

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(1) *Ijtihād li-Tajdīd* [The Independent Rulings of Renewal] by 'Umar 'Ubayd Ḥasanah, p. 7.

(2) *Silsilat al-Aḥadīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).

(3) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 57.

"At the turn of every century…"[1]

The literal wording of the *Hadith* states: "At the *head* of every century", which could imply at the very beginning of it, just as it could mean at the end of it.[2] There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to what is meant by "head" in this context whereby some maintain it means the beginning of the century and others maintain it means the end,[3] such as Ibn Ḥajar,[4] aṭ-Ṭībī,[5] and *al-'Aẓīm* Ābādī.[6] The latter opposed the views of the Imāms, az-Zuhri and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, along with other scholars and historians, who agreed that the *Mujaddidīn* appear at the beginning of the century, namely, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) at the start of the first century and as-Shāfi'ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) at the start of the second. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz died in the year 101 of the Hijrah calendar at the age of forty and after having ruled for two and half years whilst ash-Shāfi'ī died in year 204 AH.[7] In the view of the former scholars who claim the *Mujaddidīn* appear at the end of the century, it is not plausible to count 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as the *Mujaddid* of the first century given that he was not born at the start of that century, let alone be its *Mujaddid,* and they say the same applies to ash-Shāfi'ī who was not born at the start of the second century, and so

(1) *Silsilat al-Aḥadīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* [The Chain of Verified Prophetic Narrations] (2/151).
(2) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/386).
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (13/295).
(5) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/389).
(6) *Ibid* (11/387).
(7) *Ibid.*

could not have been its *Mujaddid.*[1]

Is it a requisite for the death of a Mujaddid to occur before the end of the century?

Some scholars stipulate that in order for a person to be ascribed the title of a *Mujaddid,* his death must occur at the turn of the century. This is a likely opinion given that the word *ba'ath* (sent) in the *Hadīth* could be applied to mean dispatch, manifest, death, capture or disappearance. Nevertheless, the *Hadith* alludes to the fact that the *Mujaddid* appears at the end of the century, his reforms and acts of renewal have been made manifest, and his goodness and benefit have become widespread. As a result, it is not necessary for his death to occur shortly before the end of the century or for him to still be alive at the turn of the next century.[2]

Is the Mujaddid of the century one person or multiple people?

The saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) indicating that "he renews the religion of the *Ummah*" has raised the question, in both the past and present, whether the word "he" mentioned in the *Hadīth* signifies an individual from the *Ummah* through whom Allāh will revive the Religion, or whether it could extend to individuals and groups. Many of the scholars are more inclined towards the first opinion that the *Mujaddid* is one person, including as-

(1) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 58.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 61.

Suyūṭī who conveys this view to the masses in his poem on the *Mujaddidīn*, stating:

"His being is one and he is celebrated,
As the *ḥadīth* and the people have professed."[1]

On the other hand, scholars of the opposite view maintain that the word "he" is linguistically used in the general sense[2] to apply to both one person and a group.[3] Exponents of this view include Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn al-Athīr, adh-Dhahabī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Manāwī and *al-'Aẓīm* Ābādī.[4] Throughout the course of this study, it should become apparent that the *Hadith* effectively alludes to the general sense of the word, since history has beheld the presence of more than one *Mujaddid* at the "head" of all centuries in the past, and because the enormity of the task of renewal is not restricted to certain aspects of the Religion but all of them. Furthermore, the expanse of the Muslim *Ummah* is so vast and wide that it makes it difficult for the provision of one person alone. Instead, multiple people or groups are more capable of carrying out extensive, complete renewal if they work together.[5]

The Mujaddid renews "the Religion of the Ummah" and not the Religion itself:

One must contemplate the saying of the Messenger

(1) *'Awn al-Ma'būd* (11/394).
(2) *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 61.
(3) *Ibid*.
(4) *Ibid*, pp. 62-3.
(5) *Ibid*, p. 65.

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to grasp the proper meaning of a *Mujaddid,* as when he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "He renews the religion of the *Ummah*", the implication here is that the *Mujaddid* will bring the *Dīn* (Religion of Islām) in relation with the *Ummah* and he did not say "renew the Religion for the *Ummah.*" Revealed by Allāh to the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who faithfully taught its doctrines, acts of worship, morals, regulating the servants' relations with their Lord and so forth, the Religion was firmly established according to the way that Allāh originally sent it, without change or renewal. As for the religion of the *Ummah,* or in other words, the relations of the *Ummah* with the Religion in terms of the extent of their adherence to it and how they interpret it and apply it on the earth, it can be renewed to return the people to the level that they should be on in the context of their relationship with the Religion.[1]

(1) *Min Ajal Ṣaḥwat Islāmiyyah* [Towards an Islāmic Awakening] by al-Qaraḍāwī, pp. 26-7.

Part III

The Importance 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Attached to the Creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah:*

'Umar laid a lot of emphasis on the doctrine of belief followed by the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of the Prophetic Example) and urged that it be taught and disseminated to the masses. Numerous sayings attributed to him in connection to the teachings of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* found their place in authoritative Islāmic sources and books referring to creed, *Tafsīr* (exegesis), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and so on. In the course of compiling his Master's thesis, Professor Ḥayāt bin Muḥammad bin Jibrīl collected together many of these sources traced to 'Umar, although in his exposition of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's life story, he failed to shed sufficient light on this important aspect of his life, which drove his devotion to raise the awareness of the people by educating them on the correct doctrine of belief as it came down in the Book of

Allāh, the Sublime, and in the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The most important issues of creed ‘Umar spoke about are given below:

Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah (the Oneness of Allāh)

Tawḥid al-Ulūhiyyah forms the basis of Islām, or more accurately, it is the basis of every divine religion that was sent to all the messengers and revealed in all of their books. It is what every messenger, from Ādam (peace be upon him) to our Prophet, Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), called to as the true purpose for the creation of *Jinn* (jinn; a species created like humans but from smokeless fire as opposed to clay) and humans. Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*And I (Allāh) created not the Jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me Alone.*] (*adh-Dhāriyāt,* 56) The pious forebears of this *Ummah* (may Allāh have mercy on them) laid great emphasis on this particular doctrine of “Oneness”, one of whom was of course ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.(1) Before we can elaborate on the contributions he made on this topic of *Tawḥid,* it is first important to convey what is essentially meant by *Tawḥid al-Ulūhīyyah*. It is therefore defined as “the understanding that none has the right to be deified and worshipped except Allāh Who has no partner.”(2) Some researchers have defined it as “the Oneness of Allāh in the

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/199).

(2) *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah aṭ-Ṭaḥāwiyyah* [An Explanation of aṭ-Ṭaḥāwi's Creed] (1/29).

actions of worshippers, which is expressed through unity of requesting and meaning such that all worship is for Allāh Alone Who has no partner. He Alone deserves to be loved, feared, trusted in, implored and asked of and closeness to Him through acts of worship, whether with body or wealth, should be without associating anyone or anything to Him."(1) A plethora of traditions have been cited on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz relating to issues pertaining to *Du'ā'* (supplication), fear, hope, trust and gratitude:

Du'ā' (Supplication):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz passed by a man who was playing with a pebble in his hand whilst saying: "O Allāh! Marry me to the *Ḥuwr al-'Ayn* (Maidens of Paradise)." 'Umar therefore approached him and said: "What a wretched suitor you are! Could you not at least throw down that pebble and be sincere in your supplication to Allāh?!"(2) In another tradition, 'Umar asserts that the conditions of *du'ā'* are sincerity and presence of heart, which is consistent with the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example). Allāh says: "*So call (you, O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the believers) upon Allāh making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone)...*" (*Ghāfir,* 40:14). Likewise, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Supplicate to Allāh with confidence that He will answer you and know that Allāh

(1) *Al-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrine of Belief] (1/200).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/287); *Sīrat wa Manāqib 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life and Outstanding Traits of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 84.

does not answer the prayer of one whose heart is absent."[1]

In a supplication, 'Umar used to say: "O Allāh! Certainly, I obeyed you in the most beloved of things to you and that is *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine of the "Oneness of Allāh) and I did not disobey you in the most despised of things to you and that is *Shirk* (Polytheism; Idolatry), therefore forgive me in what lies between the two."[2] Here, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz used his obedience and *Tawḥīd* to request Allāh's forgiveness. Sure enough, he also beseeched Allāh in the name of some good deed like the three people who got stuck in the cave according to the *Hadīth* narration.[3] This story speaks of three people who sought deliverance from Allāh by beseeching Allāh in the name of good deeds that they performed on account of their good faith. In the Qur'ān, Allāh says: "*O Lord! Verily, we have heard the call of one* (Muḥammad, *may peace of Allah be upon him) calling to Faith: 'Believe in your Lord', and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, expiate from us our evil deeds, and make us die (in a state of righteousness) along with the 'Abrār' (pious believers).]* (*Āli 'Imrān*, 193) Thus, they demonstrated real faith and certainty in supplication, examples of which are plentiful.[4]

When an earthquake hit the Shām (Levant), 'Umar bin

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(1) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/483); *Saḥīh Sunan al-Albānī*, no. 2766.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 242.

(3) Muslim, no. 2743.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/219).

'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "To proceed: Certainly, this tremor is for something Allāh wishes to admonish His servants for." He had also written to the people of the major provinces telling to evacuate their cities on such a day of such a month and whatever he owned at that time he gave away in charity.[1] Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Indeed, whoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islāmic Monotheism) shall achieve success. And remembers the name of his Lord and prayers (the compulsory five prayers and additional optional prayers).*" (*al-A'lā,* 87:14-5). On that occasion, they said as Ādam (Adam) (upon him peace) said: "*They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.*" (*al-A'rāf,* 7:23). And as Nūh (Noah) (upon him peace) said: "*Nūh (Noah) said: 'O my Lord! I seek refuge in You from asking You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless you forgive me and have mercy on me, I would indeed be of the losers*" (*Hūd,* 11:47). And as Yūnus (Jonah) (upon him peace) said: "*None has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allāh), Glorified are You (above all that evil they associate with you)! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers).*" (*al-Anbiyā',* 21:87) Accordingly, 'Umar exhorted his people to resort to Allāh, give in charity, seek His forgiveness and go out to prayer at the time when the Shām was struck by an earthquake.[2]

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 64; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/304-5);

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported State-

Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "I was with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and he was crying uncontrollably at the thought of death and His Lord. I said to him: 'Why are you crying over death when Allāh has granted great good, revived *Sunan* (prophetic traditions) and eradicated *Bid'ah* (innovations in religion) through your hands?' He answered: 'Should I not be like the righteous slave who when Allāh came to his aid and settled his affairs said: [*My Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me of the sovereignty, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams – the (Only) Creator of the heavens and earth! You are my 'Walī' ('Protector, Helper, Supporter, Guardian, God, Lord) in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die as a Muslim (the one submitting to Your Will) and join me with the righteous."* (Yūsuf, 12:101) Thus, he requested death on account of his faith and asked to emulate the *Sāliḥīn* (Righteous) in his supplication to Allāh, which is in fact a supplication practiced by the prophets and an utterance of the righteous. 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) would also supplicate to Allāh for fear of *Fitnah* (trials; discord) in the *Dīn,* especially following the death of his closest confidants, his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, his slave, Mazāḥim, and his brother, Suhl, which we know from various narrations.[1]

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ments of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/220).

(1) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (4/396); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/224).

Thankfulness:

Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd is reported to have said: "It reached me that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: 'The remembrance of blessings is to give thanks for them.'"(1) 'Umar also said: "Testify to the Favour of Allāh, the Sublime, by giving thanks to Him for it."(2) He wrote to some of his officials, saying: "I advise to have *Taqwā* (fear; obedience; consciousness) in Allāh and I urge you to give thanks for what you have beneficently been granted of His blessings. To give thanks extends His blessings and to cease (giving thanks) is to deny them."(3) 'Umar would frequently exhort showing gratitude to the Creator, Glorified is He, for His Graces and Favours, as the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Example) enjoins, as Allāh says: "*...and be grateful to Allāh if it is, indeed, He Whom you worship*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:172) And He says elsewhere: "*And be grateful to Me (for my countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to me*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:152) Giving thanks also implies the enhancement of blessings, as Allāh says: "*And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting faith and worshipping none but Allāh), I will give you more (of My Blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily my punishment is indeed severe.*" (*Ibrāhīm,* 14:7) The many stories relating 'Umar's attitude towards Allāh's Favours upon His servants confirm

(1) *Muṣnaf* [The Classification] by Ibn Abī Shaybah (8/240).

(2) *Kitāb ash-Shukr Lillāh Ta'ālā* [The Book of Gratitude to Allāh, the Sublime] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

(3) *Dhamm ad-Dunyā* [Vilification of the World] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

his adherence to the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) and the depth of his faith.(1)

Trust:

Al-Ḥakm bin 'Umar said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had three-hundred guards and three-hundred law-enforcers. I saw him say to his guards: "Indeed, your job is to act as my barrier, therefore whoever undertakes that role shall receive a wage of ten *Dinar* and whoever wishes to may return to his family."(2) When 'Umar left al-Madīnah, his slave, Mazāḥim, looked up at the sky and the moon was in the phase of *Dabrān* (when the star between Pleiades and Orion follows Pleiades); it was as if it were a pessimistic omen about what was happening. Mazāḥim said: "However, I hated the thought of saying that to 'Umar so instead I said: 'Have you seen how perfect the moon is tonight?!' 'Umar replied: 'O Mazāḥim! It is as if you wanted to show me that the moon is in the phase of *Dabrān*. O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, the One, the Subduer.'"(3) 'Umar displayed firm trust in belief of their being legitimate reasons for what was happening, and that trust was his dependence in Allāh Who does things for particular reasons. Essentially, the foundations of this belief lie at the heart of *Tawḥīd* (the doctrine in the Oneness of Allāh), as

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/230).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/136).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

Allāh says: "*And put your trust* (O Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Ever Living One Who dies not, and glorify His praises, and Sufficient is He as the All-Knower of the sins of His slaves.*" (*al-Furqān*, 25:58)

Trust in Allāh is the greatest reason the requester can obtain and the one afflicted by misfortune can rebuke, as a person who denies reasons is unable to trust, whereas someone who has complete trust does not rely on reasons and his heart has no relationship with them; instead, the condition of this person's heart is founded on Allāh and the rest of the body is governed by the heart.(1)

Fear and Hope:

According to Yazīd bin 'Ayāḍ bin Ja'dibah: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote the following to Sulaymān bin Abī Karīmah: 'The worthiest servant is the one who honours Allāh and fears being afflicted by Him with the like of what has been afflicted upon me. No one is more accountable or contemptible for disobeying Allāh than me and I am not able to stand it. I fear that my position will lead me to my own destruction except if Allāh should show me His mercy. It has reached me that you want to advance forth (fight) for Allāh's Cause and so I wanted to ask of you, O brother, once you have assumed your position, to supplicate to Allāh to sustain me with the *Shahādah* (Declaration of Faith), for my situation is dire and extremely dangerous. I therefore ask Allāh Who has afflicted

(1) *Madārij as-Sālikīn* [The Traversers of the Spiritual Path] by Ibn al-Qayyim (2/125).

me with what I have been afflicted with to bestow His mercy on me and pardon me." [1]

In the days that saw the demise of 'Umar's son, brother and slave, Rabī' bin Sabrah said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* I have never seen a man suffer a greater calamity across a successive number of days than yours. I never saw a son like yours, or a brother like yours, or a slave like yours." After an hour had passed, 'Umar then said to Rabī': "What did you say to me, O Rabī'?" So I repeated it to him and he said: "No, by He who decreed their deaths, I do not want anything other than what Allāh wanted for them."[2] According to Qatādah, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his successor: "In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful. From the servant of Allāh, 'Umar, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, peace be upon you. Verily, I praise Allāh to you, of Whom there is no one worthy of worship but He, and to proceed: I am writing to you as I am holding on to my last breath. I am aware that I responsible for whom I appoint and answerable to the King of the World and Hereafter from Whom I cannot conceal my knowledge of it or of anything. He says: "*Then surely We shall narrate to them (their whole story) with knowledge, and indeed We have not been absent.*" (*al-A'rāf*, 7:7). Should the Merciful be

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/394-5); al-*Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/240).

(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1/610); al -*Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/240).

pleased with me then I have succeeded and been saved from an extended terror but if He is displeased with me then woe unto me for what awaits me! I ask Allāh, besides Whom there is no one worthy of worship but He, to save me from the *Nār* (Fire) by His Mercy and to grant me the fate of His Pleasure and *Jannah* (Paradise)."[1]

From what we have spoken about of 'Umar's combining faith of fear and hope, it certainly proves that his beliefs were in keeping with the *'Aqīdah* (doctrine of faith) of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) in demonstrating the middle path of the believer between safety from Allāh's Wrath and despairing at the Spirit of Allāh. As such, the *Salaf* would fear their Lord and hope for His Mercy[2] in observance of what Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Those [angels] they pray to are themselves seeking a way to their Lord, even those who are closest to him. They hope for His Mercy and fear His Punishment. The punishment of Your Lord is much to be feared*" (*al-'Isrā'*, 17: 57). Allāh commends people who possess fear and hope, saying: Is one who is obedient to Allāh, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves?)" [*az-Zumar*, 39:9]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Belief in the Most

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 244.

(2) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/245).

Beautiful Names of Allāh:

"The Most Beautiful Names of Allāh" are the Names of Allāh (specifically, attributes) that describe Allāh in the perfect sense of the word such that it has no defect and nothing resembles it.(1) Of course, these Names are ascribed to Allāh by Himself as described in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, amongst other places, and which demand praise and glorification in their own right.(2) Every reciter of the Qur'ān and the *Aḥadīth* knows that Allāh, Glorified is He, calls Himself by Names and that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) referred to His Lord by His Names. It is also a well-known fact that the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) testified to the Names that Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called Him, as nobody knows Allāh more than Allāh, and after Him, the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings upon Him). Allāh's Names are the Most Beautiful of all names as they are suggestive of His Being and Attributes. They are absolute, beyond comprehension, not restricted to number, not created and it is not permissible to disbelieve in any of them.(3) Within his letters and sermons, it is clear that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would frequently mention some of these Names and that 'Umar's doctrine of belief was the doctrine of Truth that is verified by the Book and *Sunnah*.

(1) *Manhaj Ahl as-Sunnah wa Manhaj al-Ashā'irah fī Tawḥīd Allāh* [The Way of the People of Prophetic Tradition and the Way of the Ash'arites on the Doctrine of the Oneness of Allāh] by Khālid 'Abd al-Laṭīf (2/391).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/304).

(3) *Ibid* (1/287).

The *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Tradition) later standardised and set the rules around the Names of Allāh, the Sublime, which might have possibly been deduced from the statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him). Some of these rules are as follows:

- **The Names of Allāh are Eternal:** 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Indeed, the greatest ignorance attached to Allāh is to claim that knowledge came after creation when, in fact, Allāh Alone never ceases to be All-Knowing of everything and All-Witnessing of everything, before He creates a thing and after He creates a thing."(1) 'Umar clarified that Allāh has Most Beautiful Names, of which are the All-Knowing and the All-Witnessing, and that these are all Eternal; this is the belief of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (People of Prophetic Tradition and Community).(2)
- **Allāh's Names are *'Tawqifiyyah'*:** This means there is no place for logic in them so it is compulsory to restrict them to that which came in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not to add to them or deny any of them because the mind (logic) is incapable of comprehending that which is deserving to Allāh from names. So naming

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(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/348); *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/304).

(2) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/305).

Allāh with that which He did not name Himself is speaking without knowledge about Allāh.

- **Allāh's Names belong to Him Alone** - Allāh has Names and Attributes which belong to Him Alone, such as the Creator, the Provider, the One God, etc. These are characteristics that a created being cannot acquire. Allāh's perfect attributes that exist in Him include *al-Qādir* (the All-Powerful), *al-ʿAlīm* (the All-Knowing), al-Ḥakīm (the Most Wise) and so on. In keeping with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah,* it is compulsory to believe in all the attributes that have been narrated from Allāh or from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in a manner that befits Allāh, whilst also believing that He does not resemble any of His creation in any of His attributes, just as He does not resemble them in Essence. It is therefore not permissible to add to, distort, falsify or deny any of Allāh's Names or Attributes, neither is it permissible to ascribe them to other than Allāh.[1] Indeed, Allāh, the Sublime, says: [*And (all) the Most Beautiful Names, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.]* (*al-Aʿrāf,* 7:180)

There is ample mention of Allāh's Names and

(1) *Ibid* (1/306).

Attributes in the letters and sermons of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, such as *Allāh, 'Azza wa Jall* (Mighty and Majestic), *ar-Rabb* (The Lord), ar-Raḥmān (The All-Compassionate) *ar-Raḥīm* (The Merciful), *al-Malīk* (The Absolute Ruler) *al-Khabīr* (The All-Aware), *al-Karīm* (The Generous), *al*-Ḥayy (The Ever Living One), *ar-Raqīb* (The Watchful One), and the list goes on.(1) At this juncture, it seems fitting to expound on some of these Names:

1) The Meaning of ar-Rabb (the Lord):

'Umar would say: "O *Rabb* (Lord)! Make my mind beneficial to me."(2) *Ar-Rabb* is one of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh, as Allāh says: "*A fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord*" (*Saba',* 34:15). *Ar-Rabb* is the owner who has full authority over his property and linguistically means the master or the one who has the authority to lead. All of these meanings are correct for Allāh. When it is alone, the word *Rabb* is used only for Allāh, as for other than Allāh, it can be used to say *rabb ad-dār,* meaning "the master of the house."(3) *Ar-Rabb* is therefore not said in the absolute sense (i.e. without limitations) except for Allāh, the One,

(1) *Ibid* (1/279-306).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 68; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

(3) *Ishtiqāq Asmā Allāh al-Ḥusnā* [The Etymology of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh] by az-Zajājī, pp. 32-3; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

the Master of His slaves Who rectifies the affairs of all creatures.[1]

2) The Meaning of *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever Living One):

A friend of 'Umar's had passed away and so he went to pay his condolences to the bereaved family who began to scream and cry in front of him. 'Umar therefore said to them: "It was not this friend of yours who used to provide for you, for the One Who provides in Ever-Living and does not die."[2] *Al*-Hayy is one of Allāh's Most Beautiful Names, as He says: "*None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever-Living One Who sustains and protects all that exists.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:255). Allāh's Life was never non-existent and it will not disappear. "Life" in reference to Allāh is understood in the perfect sense and always with complete Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight, and so on.[3]

3) The Meaning of *al-Wāḥid al-Qahār* (the One, the Subduer):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to his slave, Mazāḥim: "O Mazāḥim! We are not leaving because of the Sun or the Moon but we are leaving because of Allāh, The One,

(1) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/281).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/330); *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/288).

(3) *Ishtiqāq Asmā Allāh al-Ḥusnā* [The Etymology of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh] by az-Zajājī, p.102;

The Subduer."[1] These are among Allāh's Most Beautiful Names Who says: [On the day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allāh, the One, the Subduer] (*Ibrāhīm,* 14:48). The meaning of *Al-Wāḥid Al-Qahār* singles out His Unique Greatness, Names, Attributes and Actions and He is the One Subduer of the Worlds that are at His disposal and devisal and wherein nothing moves or lives without His permission.[2]

4) The Meaning of *al-'Alī al-'Aẓīm* (the Highest, the Magnificent):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz concluded the letters he wrote to the army generals with the words: "There is no might or power except with Allāh, the Highest, the Magnificent."[3] Allāh says: "And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Magnificent" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:255). *Al-'Alī* itself indicates the Most High above His Throne, the Most High in His Supremacy over all creation, the Most High in His Power to possess the most perfect attributes.[4] *Al-'Aẓīm* alludes to His Greatness, Power and Might. His is all that is in heaven and all that is on earth; and Most Exalted and

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 27.

(2) *Tafsīr* [Qur'ānic Exegesis] by *as-Sa'adī*, p. 428.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

(4) *Tafsīr* [Qur'ānic Exegesis] by *as-Sa'adī*, p. 110.

Tremendous is He.[1]

The above represent a mere handful of the many instances in which 'Umar mentions Allāh's Names in his letters and speeches.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Belief in the Attributes of Allāh, the Exalted:

The Attributes of Allāh, the Majestic, constitute attributes used in the perfect sense when referring to the Divine Being, such as Knowledge, Wisdom, Hearing, Seeing, Hands, Face, etc. The only things that may be attributed to Allāh are the attributes we have knowledge of based on what Allāh says about Himself in His Book and *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The correct *Tawḥīd* (doctrine of the Oneness of Allāh, the Majestic) concerning His Attributes is essentially to describe Allāh only through confirmed and verified descriptions, in other words, to confirm what He and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say about Him and, likewise, to deny what He and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) denied and refuted about Him.[2] Consequently, the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) was to adhere to this practice without adding, taking away, falsifying or changing anything from what has been confirmed. In point of fact, Allāh vilifies those who deny any of His Names or *Ayāt* (Signs;

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Aqwāl at-Tābi'īn fī Masā'il at-Tawḥīd wa al-Īmān* [The Sayings of the Early Pious Followers on Issues of the Oneness of Allāh and Faith] (3/874).

Verses; Proofs), as He says: "*And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.*" (*al-A'rāf*, 7:180) And He says: "*Verily, those who disbelieved in the Reminder (i.e. the* Qur'ān*) when it came to them (shall receive the punishment)*" (*Fussilat*, 41:40). Therefore, their way was to affirm that Allāh's Names and Attributes resemble creation in no way, as Allāh Alone is Perfect Who says: [*Nothing is like Him*] in response to likening or comparing things to Him, just as He says: [*He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing*] in response to denying or distorting the Truth.[1]

Traditions related on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz substantiate his attestation to the Attributes Allāh ascribes to Himself of His Being, Face, Knowledge, Power, Supremacy, Will, Closeness, Anger, Pleasure, Mercy, and so on.[2] Evidence of this is given below:

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(1) *Majmū' al-Fatāwa* [Collection of Legal Rulings] (3/8).

(2) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/313-359).

1. Being (Self):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz corresponded with aḍ-Ḍaḥak bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, saying: "To proceed: Verily, Allāh, the Majestic, made Islām that which pleases Himself and whichever of His servants honours it, accepts no world other than it."(1) His statement here pronounces the Attribute of Being in accordance with the Book and *Sunnah,* as Allāh says: "*And Allāh warns you against Himself.*" (*Āli 'Imrān,* 3:28). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in praise of his Lord: "I cannot praise You as You have praised Yourself."(2) The Book and *Sunnah* declare Allāh's Being or Self is Divine and Sacred.(3) Allāh's Being is therefore characterised by His Attributes and is not intended to refer to a self or being defined by specific characteristics and attributes. Allāh does not resemble His creatures — neither in His Self nor in His Attributes.(4)

2. The Face of Allāh, the Sublime:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote a letter to the *Kharijites* in

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 86; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/313).

(2) *Muslim,* no. 486.

(3) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/314).

(4) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Opinions] extracted from *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/314).

which he stated: "I swear to you by Allāh, even if you were my first born sons I would spill your blood for which I would solicit Allāh's Face and the Abode of the Hereafter."(1) Attributing a Face to Allāh is a *muḍāf* (construct state) depicting an attribute denoting possession, as opposed to "the *Ka'bah* (House) of Allāh) which is obviously not an Attribute of Allāh but takes the same construct in the non-possessive sense, as confirmed in the Book and *Sunnah,* as Allāh says: "*who remain steadfast through their desire for the Face of their Lord.*" (*ar-Ra'ad,* 13:22). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked Allāh a question that was not permissible concerning looking at the Face of His Lord, saying: "I ask you for the pleasure of looking at Your Face."(2)

3. The Power of Allāh, the Sublime:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to some of his officials: "To proceed: If you allow your power over the people to lead to their oppression, just remember the Power of Allāh over you in administering to what is put to them and that what He administers to you is everlasting."(3) In refutation of the *Qadariyyah* (a theological movement in early Islām which held that humans have complete control over their own destiny), 'Umar wrote: "Allāh is Supreme in His Power and I refute

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 75.

(2) Verified by al-Albānī in *Saḥīḥ Sunan an-Nisā'ī* [An-Nasā'ī's Authentic Traditions] (1/280-1).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 125.

anyone whose knowledge invalidates that."[1] The previous examples confirm 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's endorsement of attributing Power to Allāh, the Sublime, which is one of the Attributes affirmed in the Qur'ān, as Allāh says: "*Allāh has Power over everything*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:20). In keeping with the *Sunnah,* a *ḥadīth* (Prophetic narration) relates Abī Mas'ūd al-Badrī hit his boy and so the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: *"Know, Abī Mas'ūd, that Allāh has more Power over you than you have over this boy."*[2]

'Umar's Prohibition on Taking Graves as Places of Worship:

On the authority of Ismā'īl bin Abī Ḥakīm who said that he heard 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz saying: "The last thing the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said was: "May Allāh destroy the Jews and Christians who have taken the graves of their prophets as places of worship so that two religions will not last (or he said, will not join) in the land of the 'Arabs."[3] Ḥasīn narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz forbade the building of tombs or anything like that over grave sites."[4] Another *ḥadīth* asserts that 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) proclaimed the warning of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah

(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/347).

(2) *Muslim,* no. 1659.

(3) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. **1330;** *Muṣnaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (10/359-60).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 346.

be upon him) to his *Ummah* against taking graves as places of worship as the Jews and Christians had done and further declaring that the Muslim is prohibited from imitating those who have gone astray from the message of the Qur'ān and angered Allāh, stating that using graves as places of worship and building over them was undoubtedly forbidden by the pious predecessors of this *Ummah*.[1]

At the time when al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik commissioned 'Umar, who was then his official in al-Madīnah, with the project of constructing the Prophet's Mosque (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) involving the annexation of the apartments of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), including the apartment of 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) wherein the graves of the Prophet (peace and blessing upon him) and his two *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) were situated, it was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who ensured that the far end of the grave site was limited to one corner so as not to make it so the direction of prayer faced the Prophet's grave (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which he did by knocking down one of the walls of the house and giving it five corners.[2]

The purpose of his careful planning of the mosque was to consciously and wisely preclude the practice of *Shirk* (Associating partners with Allāh in worship) from taking place, as the people during the time of his governorship of

(1) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/264).
(2) *Ibid* (1/265).

al-Madīnah would have witnessed. There is no dispute that the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade taking his grave or the grave of anyone as a place of worship for fear of the reverence of it becoming exaggerated so much so that it might even lead to *Kufr* (Disbelief), as was the case for many a bygone nation.(1) Even though the '*Aqīdah* of his time was pure and sound in contrast to that of later days, 'Umar's ban on building over graves was based on his correct understanding of the *Sunnah* and proper observance of the Prophetic path, the way of the *Ṣaḥābah* and the jurisprudence of Allāh whereby he ordered for nothing to be built over the Prophet's grave (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lest it be taken as a place of worship. Thus, 'Umar took decisive action before the matter got out of hand and in doing so he definitely reiterated what is narrated in the authentic *ḥadīth* reported in Muslim on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullah (may Allāh be pleased with them) who said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade plastering over graves, sitting on them and erecting structures over them."(2)

The Concept of Faith according to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

'Udayy bin 'Udayy said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote the following to me: '*Imān* (Faith) includes *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i*

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(1) *Saḥiḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ an-Nawawī* [Nawawī's Explanation of Muslim's Authenticated Traditions] (2/185).

(2) *Muslim,* no. 970.

(legal laws), *Hudūd* (Allāh's ordinances between lawful and unlawful things) and *Sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company'."[1] On the authority of Ja'far bin Burqān who said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to us, saying: 'Indeed, the bonds of the Religion and the pillars of Islām are to believe in Allāh, establish the prayer and give the *Zakāh* (prescribed alms); therefore, pray on time."[2] 'Umar explained that Faith includes duties, i.e. compulsory obligations such as prayer, *Ḥajj* (Major Pilgrimage), fasting, and so on; *Sharā'i,* i.e. doctrines of belief, such as belief in Allāh, His Angels, and so on; *Hudūd,* i.e. prohibitions, such as consuming alcohol, fornication, and so on; and *Sunan,* i.e. recommended acts, such as removing harmful objects from the road and so on; all of which are entailed in Faith.[3] The above narration transmitted by 'Umar is substantiated by the Qur'ān, *Sunnah* and the sayings of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears).

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(1) *Fatḥ al-Bāri"* [The Grant of the Creator], in accordance with *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī* [The Authentic Traditions of al-Bukhārī] (1/45)

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 72; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/543).

(3) *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/545).

According to the people of truth, *Imān* (Faith) comprises of the statement of the tongue, belief in the heart and the action of the limbs.[1] The greatest proof that faith includes the statement of the tongue is Allāh's saying: "*Say (O Muslims): 'We believe in Allāh and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrāhīm (Abraham)…'*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:136). The saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also states: "I have been commanded (by Allāh) to fight the people until they proclaim: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh'. Whoever says it, he will save his life and property from me, expect for cases of the law, and their account will be with Allāh."[2] Proof that belief in the heart is part of faith can be found in the statement of Allāh: "*The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts…*" (*al-Anfāl,* 8:2). Lastly, that action of the limbs forms part of faith is corroborated by the verse: "*And Allāh would never make your faith (prayers) be lost*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:143). In fact, the occasion of revelation for this verse was when the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked: "Did you see those who died whilst they were praying towards Jerusalem?" So Allāh revealed the Verse: "*And Allāh would never make your faith (prayers) be lost.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:143). Contained in this Verse is testimony to that fact that Allāh termed their praying towards Jerusalem as an act of faith and so if this has been confirmed for prayer, it means it also

(1) *Ibid* (1/544).
(2) *Muslim,* no. 32.

extends to all other acts of obedience.[1]

In a letter, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "I ask by Allāh's Abundant Mercy and Favour to enhance the guidance of the guided and to bring those in error to seek repentance for it in place of their wellbeing."[2] That Faith fluctuates up and down, and enhances and decreases, is testified to in the Book, *Sunnah* and the sayings of the *Salaf*. Allāh says: [*And when His Verses (this* Qur'ān*) are recited to them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith*] (*al-Anfāl,* 8:2). The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said: "He who is not faithful cannot have belief."[3] Of the sayings attributed to the *Ummah's* pious predecessors is that of al-Bukhārī who said: "I have met more than a thousand scholars from the major cities and I have never come across anyone who differs on the opinion that Faith includes speech and action and that it increases and decreases."[4]

Belief in the Last Day:

This topic demands a lot of attention, as it covers a vast array of details and events based on what we know from

(1) *Al-I'tiqād* [Belief] by al-Bayhaqī, pp. 95-6; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/545).

(2) *Muslim,* no. 32.

(3) *Al-Īmān* [Faith] by Ibn Abī Shaybah, p. 5; authenticated by al-Albānī; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/553).

(4) *Al-Bukhārī* in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (1/47).

Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), beginning with what takes place after death to the torture and bliss of the grave, the summoning and resurrection, what happens on the Day of Judgment, reward and punishment, Paradise and Hellfire, and so on. On these issues, 'Umar spoke about the following points:

1. The Torture and Bliss of the Grave:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to a man: "O so and so! Yesterday, I read a *Sūrah* (chapter of the Qur'ān) that speaks of a visit: "*The mutual rivalry (for piling up worldly things) diverts you Until you visit the graves (i.e. till you die)*" (*at-Takāthur,* 102:1-2). How long might the visitor linger before he is commissioned to either *Jannah* (Paradise) or the *Nār* (Fire)?"[1] On one occasion, he said during a sermon: "See you not that you are in the loins of the dead, to be taken by those who remain after you, until all matters return to the Best of Inheritors?"[2] In a sermon he delivered in *Khanāsser*, he said: "Every day you dispatch to Allāh, at all times of the day, someone who has died, his term having come to an end. You bury him in a crack in the earth and then leave him without a pillow or a bed. He has parted from his loved ones, severed his connections with the living, and taken up residence in the earth, whereupon he comes face to face with

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(1) *Hilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/317); *al-Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar* [The Complete Biography of 'Umar] (1/336).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 259-69.

the accounting. He is mortgaged to his deeds – he needs his accomplishments, but not the material things he left on earth."[1]

Here, his speech reiterates the belief of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* (the People of Prophetic Tradition and the Community) in the punishment and bliss of the grave in reference to what the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* maintains, as Allāh says: *"Allāh will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep on worshipping Allāh Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter*] (*Ibrāhīm*, 14:27) The authentic *Aḥadīth* further testify to the punishment of the grave.[2] Allāh says: *"The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon"* (*Ghāfir*, 40:45)

2. Belief in *Mi'ād* (Resurrection) and that Allāh Will Come Down to Judge:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz gave a sermon in *Khanāsser* in which he said: "People! Verily, you were not created in vain, neither were you left without purpose. Indeed, you have an appointed time on which Allāh – the Most High – will come down to judge you. Wretched and ruined will be the one who is left out from the Mercy of Allāh and is denied a Garden whose width is that of the heavens and earth. Know you not that no one will be safe tomorrow save the one who is wary and fearful of today, and sells the transitory for what will remain, the little for the plenty, and fear in exchange for

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ar-Rūḥ* [The Soul] by Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 144.

security [in the Hereafter]?"[1] To some of his officials, 'Umar wrote: "When all servants shall be returned to their Lord, they will be divided up between those who did bad and those who did good."[2] Jarīr bin Ḥāzim is reported to have said that he read a letter addressed to 'Addi written by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in which he said: "Know that one judges another until he himself is cleared of all charges and therefore it is necessary for all judging to be postponed until the Day of Judgment."[3] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, saying: "I remind you of a night that will deliver the Hour and whose morning will be the Resurrection. So be wary of a night and be wary of morning that is going to be hard on the *Kāfirīn* (Disbelievers)."[4] To some of his soldiers, he wrote: "I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; fear; obedience) in Allāh and hold fast to obeying Him. Whoever desires *Jannah* (Paradise) and wants to escape the *Nār* (Fire), turn to Allāh now in these days when repentance is acceptable and sins are forgivable before the appointed time is decreed, upon which nothing else can be offered to Allāh, no ransom will be accepted for the deeds you bear and no trick can help deceive what you secretly hid inside. All people will have their deeds returned to them and they will be spilt up into ranks.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

(2) *Dhamm ad-Dunyā* [Vilification of the World] by Ibn Abī Dunyā, p. 81.

(3) *Fī az-Zuhd* [In Asceticism] by Hināf as-Sirrā (1/299-300; *Al -Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/448).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 115; Abū Ḥafṣ al-Malā' (1/206).

Therefore, whoever obeys Allāh, repent for that day, and woe unto him who disobeys Allāh, the Majestic."[1]

Belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the fulfilment of Allāh's divine plan for creation, and the judgment of the soul, after which the righteous are rewarded with the pleasures of *Jannah* (Paradise) while the unrighteous are punished in *Jahannam* (Hell) are all articles of faith in accordance with the correct *'Aqīdah* of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. 'Umar testified and advocated these beliefs that undisputedly constitute some of the most important and distinguishing articles of faith in Islām. A significant portion of the Qur'ān deals with these beliefs, with many *ahadith* elaborating on their themes and details. It also emphasises the inevitability of resurrection, judgment, and the eternal division of the righteous and the wicked. Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Allāh Alone originates the creation, then He will repeat it, then to Him you will be returned.*" (*ar-Rūm,* 30:11) He says: "*Then (again), surely you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection.*" (*al-Mu'minūn,* 23:16) To the deniers of resurrection, He says: "*Does not man see that We have created him from 'nuṭfah' ('mixed drops of male and female discharge'). Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open opponent. And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: 'Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?' Say (O* Muḥammad,

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 115-6; Abū Ḥafṣ al-Malā' (1/266).

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'He will life to them then Who created them the first time!' And he All-Knower of every creation'" (*Yā-Sīn,* 36:77-9) And Allāh says: [*Does man think that he will be left neglected (without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties enjoined by Lord on him)? Was he not a 'nuṭfah' emitted (poured forth)? Then he becomes an "alaqah' ('a clot'); then (Allāh) shaped and fashioned (him) in due proportion. And made him of two sexes, male and female. Is not He (Allāh Who does that) Able to give life to the dead? (Yes! He is Able to do all things!)"'* (*al-Qiyāmah,* 75:36-40) The *hadith* also verify to these beliefs, such as that reported by Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them) from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "Allāh said: 'The son of Ādam tells a lie against me though he has no right to do so, and he abuses Me though he has no right to do so. As for his telling a lie against Me, it is that he claims that I cannot recreate him as I created him before; and as for his abusing Me, it is his statement that I have offspring. No! Glorified be Me! I am far from taking a wife or offspring!'"[1] 'Umar is included as one of the transmitters of these traditions.[2]

(1) *Al-Bukhārī,* no. 3093.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/452).

3. *Al-Mīzān* (Balance; Scales):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Do you not see the state of the dead? His face has been lost, his memory forgotten and his house abandoned, as if he had never lived amongst his brothers. Be fearful of a day when not even as much as the weight of a mustard seed will be hidden on the *Mizān* (Balance) of deeds."(1) He also said: "I seek refuge in Allāh from ordering you to do something that I have not applied to myself that might diminish my outcome and expose my shortcomings in the reckoning of the Scales."(2)

Baḥdal ash-Shāmī is reported to have said on the authority of his father, who was a companion of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, that he said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz reading the Verse: "'*And We shall set up Scales of Justice on the Day of Resurrection.*'" (*al-'Anbiyā',* 21:47) When he finished reciting it to the end, he began to lean on one side to stop him from falling to the floor.(3) Thus, after the resurrection from the graves and the journey to Allāh along with His descent as befits Him, Glorified is He, judgment will take place through the setting up of the *Mīzān* (Scales), which will weigh up the deeds of all servants. This series of events

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 255.

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/291); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 232-44.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 248.

is in line with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.* [1] According to Ibn Ḥajar, Abū Isḥāq az-Zujāj said: "The *Ahl as-Sunnah* unanimously concur on the belief in the *Mīzān* and that the deeds of servants are going to be weighed up on the Day of Judgment on these Scales. In the view of the Mu'tazilah and others who deny belief in the *Mīzān* by claiming: "It is an expression of justice", they contradict the Book and the *Sunnah,* as Allāh has informed us of the setting up of Scales for the weighing of deeds whereby they will be witnesses to themselves.[2] Furthermore, these Scales are precise, with no adding or taking away, as Allāh says: "*And We shall set up Balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account.*" (*al-Anbiyā',* 21:47)

4. *Al-Ḥawḍ* (The Pool in Paradise):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to the chief of Damascus to ask Abī Salām what he had heard from Thawbān, the slave of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concerning the *Ḥawḍ* (The Pool in Paradise) and if he can verify it then to send him on a mount to deliver the news.[3] Another narration states: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

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(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/457).

(2) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (13/538).

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/462).

summoned Abī Salām al-Ḥabshī to be brought to him and upon his arrival, the latter said: "That was certainly burdensome for me." 'Umar remarked: "We did not want that at all but I have been informed that you heard a *hadith* from Thawbān about the *Ḥawḍ* and I wanted to hear it directly from your mouth." At that point, he began: "I heard from Thawbān that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "My *Ḥawḍ* (Pool in Paradise) is from 'Āden to 'Ammān in length.[1] Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and its drinking goblets are as numerous as the stars in the sky. The one who drinks from it will never feel thirsty again and the first to arrive there will be the poor among the *Muhājirīn* (Emigrants)."[2] In light of this, there is absolutely no question that belief in the *Ḥawḍ* belongs to the creed of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* on the basis of the explicitness of the texts relating on it and their frequency.

5. *Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ* (The Bridge):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to a brother of his, saying: "O brother! You have travelled a great deal and stayed in one place for much less. Just remember, O brother, the origins and places of destination, for it was revealed to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Holy Qur'ān that you are among those who will arrive [at

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(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/463).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 37.

the *Ṣirāṭ*], whilst it does not state that you would be among those who depart from and escape it. Be wary of letting the *Dunyā* (World) deceive you, for it has a dwelling that is not a dwelling and money that is not money."(1) This narration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) testifies to his belief in the *Ṣirāṭ,* that is the narrow bridge which every person must pass on that crucial Day to enter Paradise. Below this path are the fires of *Jahannam* (Hell), which burn the sinners to make them fall. It is said that it is as thin as a hair and as sharp as the sharpest sword. Those who performed acts of goodness in their lives are transported across the path in speeds according to their deeds leading them to the *Ḥawḍ* (Pool in Paradise). Thus, some will pass at the speed of lightning, others at the speed of wind, and others yet as if they are walking on sand but who will get burnt to make them fall into the flames of Hell.(2) The Book and *Sunnah* substantiate the crossing of the *Ṣirāt,* as Allāh says: "*There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished*" (*Maryam,* 19:71). Allāh also says: "*Then We shall save those who used to fear Allāh and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the Ẓālimūn (polytheists and wrongdoers) therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell).*" (*ibid:* 72)

On the same note, the Prophet (may peace and blessings

(1) *Ibid,* p. 257.

(2) *Sharḥ aṭ-Ṭaḥāwiyyah* [At-Tahawiyyah's Explanation], p. 470; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/468).

of Allah be upon him) said: "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! The Fire will not roar at any of those who pledged their allegiance under the tree." So Ḥafṣah said: "O Messenger of Allāh! Does Allāh not say: "*There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished]* (*Maryam,* 19:71) So he replied: "Did you hear the part where He says: "*Then We shall save those who used to fear Allāh and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the Ẓālimūn (polytheists and wrongdoers) therein (humbled) to their knees (in Hell)"* (*ibid:* 72) This indicates that arriving at the Fire does not imply entering it and that deliverance from evil does not mean obtaining it. The believers will pass over the Fire on the Bridge then Allāh will save those who feared him and scatter the evildoers therein. From the *ḥadīth,* we know that "arrival" means to arrive at the Bridge.[1] It is also true to say that it means to arrive at the Fire, in other words, the arrival of the *Kuffār* (Disbelievers) as the people of the Fire, which absolutely does imply their entering it in this case, as Allāh says: [*He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Resurrection, and will lead then into the Fire, and evil indeed is the place to which they are led."* (*Hūd,* 11:98) Of course, the second type of arrival is that of the Monotheists who must cross over[2] the *Ṣirāt,* which is what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was alluding to in his letter.

(1) *Ibid,* p. 471.

(2) *Al-Qiyāmah al-Kubrā* [The Greatest Resurrection] by al-Ashqar, p. 278.

6. *Al-Jannah* (Paradise) *and an-Nār* (Hellfire):

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz cried, so Fāṭimah cried too, then the whole family began to cry, while none of them knew what the others were crying for. Once they had all calmed down, Fāṭimah asked: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* What causes you to cry?" He answered: "I recalled, O Fāṭimah, the departing of the people from in front of Allāh; one group will go to *Jannah* (Paradise) and the other group to the Blaze", at that point he exclaimed and collapsed.(1) Sufyān is reported to have said: "One day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sat in silence whilst his companions were talking around him, so they said to him: 'Why are you not speaking, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn?'* He replied: 'I was thinking about how the people of *Jannah* will visit one another therein and about how the people of the *Nār* will scream', and then he began to cry."(2)

'Umar wrote to some of his soldiers saying: "Know that the poverty and afflictions suffered by a servant who is pleasing to Allāh and on his way to *Jannah* in this world are not harmful to him, whilst a servant who displeases Allāh and is on his way to the *Nār* will not be benefited by the luxuries and comfort of this world. The people of *Jannah* shall discover the deception of what they thought harmed them in their lives on this earth, just as the people of the *Nār* shall taste the reality of what they thought were blissful luxuries in their lives but how they

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(1) *Ar-Riqqah wa al-Bakā'* [Sensitivity and Crying] by Ibn Abi Dunya, p. 76.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 154.

certainly are not!"[1] Al-Faḍl bin Rabī' said that he heard Fuḍayl bin 'Ayyāḍ say: "I was informed that an official of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz once complained to him and so 'Umar wrote to him: 'My brother! I recall the everlasting duration the people of the *Nār* will abide and so beware of your departing from Allāh, as that will be the last promise and the end of hope." Upon reading 'Umar's letter, he rushed through the land to see 'Umar, who said at his arrival: "What brings you here?" He answered: "My heart has been wrenched by your letter. I will never go back to governing until my meeting with Allāh, the Sublime."[2]

'Umar's belief in *Jannah* and the *Nār* was according to what the Book of Allāh and the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say, in the words of Allāh: "*Verily, the 'Abrār ('pious believers of Islām') will be in Delight (Paradise).*" (*al-Infiṭār,* 82:13) And Allāh says: [*But whoever comes to Him (Allāh) as a believer and has done righteous deeds, for such are the high ranks (in the Hereafter). 'And (Eden) Paradise (everlasting gardens) under which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide forever, and such is the reward of those who purify themselves (by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allāh has forbidden and by doing all that Allāh has ordained).*" (*Ṭa-ha,* 20:75-6) Concerning this, the Messenger ((may peace and blessings of Allah be upon

(1) *Ibid,* pp.250-1; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/473).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 124-5; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/474).

him) said: “When any one of you dies, he is shown his seat (in the Hereafter) morning and evening; if he is amongst the inhabitants of Paradise (he is shown the seat) from amongst the inhabitants of Paradise and if he is one from amongst the denizens of Hell (he is shown the seat) from amongst the denizens of Hell, and it will be said to him: ‘That is your seat until Allāh raises you on the Day of Resurrection (and sends you your proper seat).”[(1)]

7. The Believers Will See their Lord in *Jannah:*

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote to some of his Commanders-in-Chief: “I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; obedience) of Allāh, to be steadfast in His Commands, to uphold what He has entrusted you with of His Religion and His Book. Verily, with *Taqwā,* the friends of Allāh are saved from His Wrath, they realise His Supremacy, stand with[(2)] His prophets, their faces are glowing and they see their Creator.[(3)] This was what ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz believed, whereby seeing Allāh in *Jannah* was one of the greatest blessings after the blessing of success and favour. In describing the believers on that Day, Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Some faces that Day shall be ‘Nāḍirah’ (‘shining and radiant’). Looking at their Lord*

(1) *Muslim,* no. 2866.

(2) In *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’ [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite], Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī and Abū Ḥafṣ *al-Malā’* it says “accompanied” instead of “agreed with.”

(3) *Ar-Rudd ‘alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refutating the Jahmites] by ad-Dārimī, p. 103; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/479).

(Allāh)." (*al-Qiyāmah,* 75:22-3) He also says: [*For those who have done good is the best (reward, i.e. Paradise) and even more (i.e. having the honour of glancing at the Countenance of Allāh)."* (*Yūnus,* 10:22) Ṣuhayb is reported to have said that when this Verse was said to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he said: 'Once the people of *Jannah* enter *Jannah* and the people of the *Nār* enter the *Nār,* a caller cries: 'O people of *Jannah!* You have an appointment with Allāh in which He wishes to reward you!' So they will say: 'And what is that reward? Has He not already made out faces bright, made our scales heavy, entered us into *Jannah*, and pushed us away from the *Nār?*" Then the *Ḥijāb* (cover; partition; veil) will be removed and they will look at their Lord. By Allāh! Allāh has not granted them anything more beloved to them than to look at their Lord, the Majestic."[1]

Adherence to the Book, Prophetic *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

Following the Book and Sunnah:

At the time of 'Umar's accession to the caliphate, he wrote: "Verily, I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; obedience) of Allāh, to hold fast to His Book and to emulate the *Sunnah* (Example; Tradition) and guidance of His Prophet

(1) *Muslim,* no. 297.

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1] It is not for a person to have an opinion or command regarding the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* but instead to enforce it and endeavour towards it...[2] That which myself and the rest of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have been ordered to do is to follow the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to desist from inclining towards desires and wayward deviation. To pursue other than these two things (i.e. the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*) is neither noble nor dignified in this world and the Hereafter. This is certainly the most fitting way for you, for I would sooner die than to bring you to follow other than the Book of your Lord and the *Sunnah* of your Prophet who lived in utter compliance with it and Allāh caused him to die in utter compliance with it. Now it has come to me and I am anxious to adhere to it; truly, the most contemptible people in my eyes are those who attempt to disagree with any part of that *Sunnah*."[3] 'Umar also said: "Verily, Allāh imposed *Farā'iḍ* (duties) and set *Sunan* (traditions; acts of worship) to see who affords them

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 65; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/284).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 68; *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/287).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 71; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/601).

their rights and who abandons them."[1]

On the same note, he said: "If only every time I governed you by the Book of Allāh, and acted upon it myself, and every time I governed you by a *Sunnah* one of limbs dropped off until it eventually ended with my departure (death)!"[2] He wrote to the Kharijites: "Indeed, I call you to (follow) the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."[3] And he said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with the *Sunnah,* adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell)."[4] These are but a few examples confirming 'Umar's adherence to the Book and *Sunnah,* the effort and energy he spent in applying it, even if that led to him losing his own limbs and

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin "Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 39.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 130; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/602).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/602).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

his own death. 'Umar's approach derived from what lies at the heart of the Religion, about which Allāh says: [*But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission]* (*an-Nisā'*, 4:65). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O people! I have left you with that which you can find refuge in; therefore never err from the Book of Allāh and my *Sunnah*."[1]

Adhering to the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs:

Ḥājib bin Khalīfah al-Barjamī is reported to have said: "I saw 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as he was delivering a sermon to the people at the time when he was Caliph and he said: "Is not the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions a religion for us to adopt and attain? There is no other *Sunnah* that we could wish for."[2] 'Umar wrote to Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb saying: "From 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to Sālim bin 'Abdullah: I have been burdened with the affairs of this *Ummah* without having taken counsel on it and against my own will. Thus, should this letter reach you, write down the

(1) *Muwatta' Mālik* (3/93); and al-Ḥākim (1/93).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5/298); *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa* al-Ḥakm [Compilation of the Science and Governance], p. 288.

Sīrah (life story; example) of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb concerning the people of his era and I will follow his way to support me in this (i.e. running the caliphate), peace."(1)

Az-Zuhri narrated: "A man said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'I divorced my wife while I was drunk." At first, 'Umar was of the opinion that the man should be flogged and separated from his wife until Abān bin 'Uthmān informed him (on the authority of his father): 'It is not compulsory for the *Majnūn* (possessed; insane) or drunkard to get divorced'. So 'Umar said: 'You are telling me that this was narrated by 'Uthmān bin 'Affān?' And so, he flogged the man and returned his wife to him."(2) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with a *Sunnah,* adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell)."(3) His statement here shows that 'Umar consciously observed the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 108.

(2) *Ibid* (4/31); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/637).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

Caliphs in restoring the features and characteristics of the guided caliphate, following their guidance, holding fast to their *Sunan* (examples; traditions) and reverting to their sayings in times of strife and for governing the people under his rule; not only did he apply this to his caliphate but similarly to his daily worship and dealings. Thus he primarily paid attention to the first and second caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umār, on the premise that reverting to their *Sunnah* was reverting to the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and next to the third caliph whereby he applied what he heard directly, and lastly, he adhered to the *Sunnah* of the fourth caliph in his dealing with the Kharijites such that 'Umar wrote to them concerning battles and judged cases involving their wealth, children and captives in keeping with the judgment of the Fourth Caliph, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with them all).(1)

In sum, 'Umar believed that anyone who moved away from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allāh be pleased with them) had gone outside the path of the Believers and was from a destructible sect. He also believed that everything the Rightly-Guided Caliphs did was in accordance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) given that they would have acted on what he ordered them to do and there is no *Wājib* (duty) in the Religion except for what he made a duty,

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/637).

no *Harām* (prohibition) except that which he prohibited, no *Mustaḥab* (recommended thing) except that which he said was recommended, no *Makrūḥ* (disliked thing) except that which he said was disliked and no *Mubāḥ* (allowed) except that which he allowed. Following the *Sunnah* of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in creed and rulings is the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears), as the Qur'ān testifies: [*And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (*Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him on the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell – what an evil destination]* (*an-Nisā'*, 4:115) Regarding this, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "You must follow my *Sunnah* and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Hold fast to it and adhere to it. Avoid newly invented matters [in religion], for every newly invented matter [in religion] is an innovation, and every innovation is an error."[1] Hudhayfah (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "We were sitting the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: 'I do not know how much longer I will remain with you, so take these two as an example (to follow) after me', and he pointed to Abū Bakr and 'Umar."[2]

Clinging to the Fiṭrah (Natural Disposition):

Ja'far bin Ruqān is reported to have said: "A man went

(1) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/44); an authentic *Ḥadīth.*

(2) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (5/601); *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhī* by al-Albānī (3/200).

to ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and asked him about something related to heretic tendencies, to which ‘Umar gave the response: ‘You should follow the religion of the young man in the Book and the religion of the Arab man and leave everything else’.”(1) [*So, set (*O Muḥammad, *peace be upon him) your face towards the religion ‘Ḥanīf’ (worshipping none but Allāh Alone), Allāh’s ‘Fiṭrah’ (i.e. Islāmic Monotheism) with which He has created mankind]* (*Ar-Rūm,* 30:30). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No child is born except on the *Fiṭrah* and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian of Magian (Zoroastrian), as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body mutilated?” Abū Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) then said: “Allāh’s *Fiṭrah* with which He created mankind. There is to be no change to the creation (Religion) of Allāh.”(2)

A sound *Fiṭrah* therefore recognises its Creator, loves Him, is humble before Him and is sincere towards His Religion in which it finds strength. For this reason, the *Fiṭrah* acknowledges the Religion’s Laws as effective, since it identifies and infers these Laws as constituting an elaborate culmination of the details brought by the messengers who conveyed and reminded the people of them, whilst acknowledging the causes for opposing the inherent *Fiṭrah* to be the obstruction of its impact.(3)

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(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah ‘an ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz fi al-‘Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/819).

(2) *Al-Bukhārī,* no. 1358.

(3) *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl,* pp.629-30.

His Position in relation to the Ṣaḥābah (Companions) and the Disagreement between them:

'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin al-Qāsim narrated from his father who said: "I was pleased by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's statement when he said: 'I would not have liked for the Companions of the Messenger (peace and blessings upon them) to have not disagreed, as had they all unanimously concurred on one view, the people would have been constricted whereas the *Imāms* (leaders) were exemplary such that if a man followed the speech of one them, it was sufficient."[1] Abū 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) said that he applied this approach to *Ijtihād* (issuing independent rulings).[2] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was asked about what happened in the Battle of Ṣiffīn and so he said: "Allāh stopped that blood from touching my hands and I hate to stain my tongue with it."[3] Muḥammad bin an-Naḍr is reported to have said: "The disagreement between the Companions of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was mentioned in the presence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and so he said: 'It is an affair Allāh removed

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(1) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* [Declaration of Knowedge] (2/901-902); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/410).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/410).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/394); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/412).

from your hands that your tongues are executing instead."[1] Like the pious predecessors and scholars, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz emphasised highlighting the virtues of the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for Allāh says: "*Indeed, Allāh was pleased with the believers when they gave the 'bay'ah' ('pledge') to you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down 'as-sakīnah' ('calmness and tranquillity') upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory*" (*al-Fatḥ,* 48:18)

The position of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* is to not mention any of the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) except in a commendable manner and to refrain from commenting on what ensued between them, as they are the most deserving and worthy people of being excused and are considered as having the most excellent beliefs.[2] Ibn Ḥajar said: "The *Ahl as-Sunnah* are agreed on the obligation to forbid defaming any of the Companions on account of what happened between them as if to say one was more correct than the other. They did not fight in those battles except on the basis of *Ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and in that case it has been verified that one group will be rewarded one reward and the other will be rewarded two."[3] The above statements made by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz clarify his beliefs

(1) *Ibid* (5/382); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (5/382).

(2) *Ath-Thamr ad-Dānī fī Taqrīb al-Ma'ānī: Sharḥ Risālah Abī Zayd* [The Close at Hand Fruits in Getting Closer to Meanings: An explanation of Abī Zayd's Treatise], p. 23.

(3) *Fatḥ al-Bāri'* [Grant of the Creator] (13/34).

on the Companions and that they are in keeping with the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.*

His Position in relation to the Ahl al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

Ibn al-Qayyim states that the scholars differ in their definitions and designations of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which have been categorised as below:

1. They include those who were exempt from accepting charity, whose designations differ between:
   - They were the *Banū* Hāshim and *Banū* al-Muṭṭalib (tribes);
   - They were specifically the *Banū* Hāshim (tribe);
   - They were the *Banū* Hāshim and the majority of their descendants.
2. The family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) includes his wives and children;
3. His family includes his followers until the Day of Judgment;
4. His family are the *Atqiyā'* (Pious) among his *Ummah.*[1]

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy on him) then gives preference to the first statement that the family of the Prophet

(1) *Jalā' al-Afhām fī aṣ-Ṣalāt wa as-Salām 'alā Khayr al-An'ām*, p.109.

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) includes those who were forbidden from taking charity.[1] According to the view of the *Shī'ah* (Shi'ites), the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is considered as referring to 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and the latter two's descendants, although this contradicts the authentic sources and goes against both language and convention. Reason being that the phrase *Ahl al-Bayt* is used in the Holy Qur'ān in the context of addressing the wives of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) where Allāh says: [*And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and perform the 'Ṣalāt' (prayers), give the 'Zakāt' (prescribed alms) and obey Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allāh wishes only to remove 'ar-Rijs' (evil deeds and sins) from you, O members of the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to purify you with a thorough purification."* (*al-Aḥzāb,* 33:33). An in-depth refutation of the Shi'ite Imamate based on this verse can be found in my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz acknowledged the material and moral rights of the *Ahl al-Bayt* to whom he afforded ample provision without holding back too much or being excessive.[2] Along these lines, he rectified the wrongs that had been done

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(1) *Ibid,* pp.110-9; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/428).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/429).

to them and instead treated them with utter benevolence, in the material and moral sense. Juwayriyyah bint Asmā' narrated: "I heard Fāṭimah bint 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib mention 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and she could not have spoken more nicely about him. She went on to say: 'I entered into his presence in the days when he was the Governor of al-Madīnah, upon which dismissed every single guard and attendant until just he and I remained in the house. He then said: 'O daughter of 'Alī! By Allāh, there is no *Ahl al-Bayt* (family) on the face of the earth more beloved to me than yours and you (all) are more beloved to me than my own family'."(1)

'Abdullah bin Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Abī Ṭālib narrated: "The first allocation of funds 'Umar would make would be sent to us, the *Ahl al-Bayt,* whereby he gave our women the same as what our men would give them and he gave our children the same as what our women would give them. He therefore gave the *Ahl al-Bayt* three thousand *Dirhams* and wrote to us: 'I have given you what remained to be given to you of all your rights'."(2) Ḥusayn bin Ṣāliḥ is reported to have said: "The people were talking about ascetics in the presence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz during which they mentioned the names of some individuals until 'Umar interrupted and said: 'The most ascetic person in the world was 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him)'."(3) Like the others among the *Salaf* (pious

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes'] (5/388).

(2) *Ibid* (5/392).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 292.

predecessors), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz actively afforded the rights of the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* to them in compliance with the command on the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said: "My *Ahl al-Bayt,* I remind you, in the name of Allāh, about my *Ahl al-Bayt.*"(1) Ibn Taymiyyah said: "It is among the basic principles of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* to love the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to respect their rights in fulfillment of the Prophet's requests (peace and blessings upon them). The family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has rights that must be granted. Allāh has allocated to them a share of the *Khums* (fifth of the war booty) and *Fay'* (conquered land and property), and He has enjoined that blessings be sent upon them along with the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings upon them)."(2) The rights mentioned here by Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) are those observed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who fulfilled all aspects of these demands stated in Islāmic law. As such, he returned the garden of Fadak, located in the north of al-Madīnah, and granted them a fifth of the *Khums* and their share of *Fay'.*(3)

Furthermore, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) paid attention to the material and moral rights of the family of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of

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(1) *Muslim*, no. 2408.

(2) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Opinions] (3/407).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/433).

Allah be upon him) by vigilantly complying with, and similarly refraining from, Allāh's commands concerning them and ardently following the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears)[1] (may Allāh be pleased with them). As for the books of history that suggest the Umayyad rulers preceding 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz were accustomed to slandering 'Alī, this claim, according to Ibn Sa'ad, is untrue, on the topic of which he says: "'Alī bin Muḥammad informed us that Lūṭ bin Yaḥyā said: 'The Umayyad rulers preceding 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would slander the man (may Allāh be pleased with him) and upon 'Umar's assumption of the caliphate, he stopped the practice and abstained from doing it. An elegy about 'Umar reads:

"You came to power and you refused to insult 'Alī, harm the innocent

And follow the ways and comments of the criminals;

You spoke the honest truth and moreover

You demonstrated signs of guidance through speech;

And so, you were truthful in what you said

But you also did what you said and so every Muslim was satisfied."[2]

However, this narration is unfounded, as 'Alī bin Muḥammad was a weak narrator and his *Shaykh,* Lūt bin Yaḥyā once narrated a weak tradition, about whom Yaḥyā bin Ma'īn said: "He was not reliable." Likewise, Abū Ḥātim

(1) *Ibid* (1/435).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5/147).

said: "He is abandoned in *Ḥadīth.*" In *al-Mizān,* ad-Daraqaṭnī says: "His reporting is weak and he cannot be relied on."(1) In general, his narrations are ascribed to weak, deceased or anonymous transmitters.(2)

The Shiite label Mu'āwiyah (may Allāh be pleased with him) as the instigator behind the slandering of 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) to the extent that they curse Mu'āwiyah on the pulpits of the mosques. Not only is this claim absolutely baseless but, even more so, researchers have exposed the disgrace of their calumny without even having subjected it to thorough criticism and analysis. Rather, historians have stumbled upon a plethora of inexplicable suspects that leave no room for discussion because of the absurdity of their logic. It suffices to say that these narrations we are referring to here are not verified as authentic and so we cannot rely on the accounts given in the books of ad-Damīrī, al-Ya'qūbī or Abī al-Farj al-Aṣfahānī. More precisely, the correct history is contrary to what those writers would suggest happened.(3) In view of Mu'āwiyah's respect and admiration for the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī, and his sanctified *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family), it makes no sense that he would curse 'Alī on the pulpits of the Umayyads and so reason would have it that it is not worth disputing. Alternatively, if we return to the history books contemporary with the Umayyads, we find that no such thing is mentioned therein, ever, whilst such claims are found in the

(1) *Al-Mīzān* (3/419).

(2) *Difā'an 'an as-Salafiyyah,* p. 187.

(3) Al-Ḥasan *wal*-Ḥusayn, by Muḥammad Riḍā, p. 18; *Kalām al-Muḥaqq,* by Dr. Aḥmad Abū ash-Shabāb.

book written at the time of Abbasids with the aim of discrediting the Umayyad's reputation in the eyes of the masses. The lies forged by the likes of al-Mas'ūsī and other Shi'ite historians later crept into the books of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* despite them being false narrations. It follows that this is a problem in need of rectification. Their chains of narration need to be repaired from damage and their text matter from remonstration, which is a well-known fact to analysts and researchers.

It goes without saying that Mu'āwiyah was far from what they ascribe and allege about him, as his merit is verified in the *Dīn* as being praiseworthy in the sight of the *Ummah,* esteemed by some of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and commended by the finest *Tābi'īn* (second or third generation followers), all of whom witnessed the merit of his religion, knowledge, justice and clemency among many other outstanding traits.(1) Without question, it is Mu'āwiyah's right (may Allāh be pleased with him) to be championed for being poles apart from what is claimed about him inciting the people to curse 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) on the pulpits. Quite the reverse, examples of Mu'āwiyah's patience and mildness are so replete he is considered an exemplar for the generations.(2)

Scandals and forgery of this kind have been dealt with in extensive detail in my book entitled *Khāmis al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn:* Al-Ḥasan *bin 'Alī bin* Abī Ṭālib [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib], in which the

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(1) *Al-Intiṣār li-Ṣuḥub wal-Āl* (Victory for Friends and Family] by ar-Raḥīlī, p.367.

(2) *Khāmis al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshidīn:* Al-Ḥasan *bin 'Alī bin* Abī Ṭālib [The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph: Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib], p. 303.

relationship between Mu'āwiyah and the children of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, once he had the secured the caliphate for himself, is portrayed to show that there was nothing but friendship, love, respect and honour between them. In the general sense, it further conveys the regulation of his contemporary society as being in line with the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law) and their anxiousness to adhere to it, making them anything but slanderers and foul abusers. Given that the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade insulting the dead *Mushrikīn* (idolaters), what then for someone who insulted the righteous *Awliyā'* (Friends) of Allāh? 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) directly narrated the *Ḥadīth:* "Do not abuse the dead, for they have reached the result of what they have done."[1]

'Umar's Stance on the Kharijites, Shi'ites, *Qadariyyah*, Murjites and Jahmites

The Kharijites:

This group first emerged during the caliphate of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him), specifically, in the year 37 AH following the Battle of Ṣiffīn, which was indecisive and resulted in the two parties agreeing to an arbitration, which was equally indecisive. In my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the details and phenomena surrounding

(1) *Al-Bukhārī,* no. 6515.

this group are documented in greater detail, however, what we are interested in at present are the Kharijites' extreme doctrines, which include:

- Declaring 'Alī bin Abī Ṭalib and 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (may Allāh be pleased with them) *Kuffār* (Disbelievers), as well as the arbitrators, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (may Allāh be pleased with them);
- Advocating dissidence from an unjust leader, whilst some went as far as claiming that there was no need for an *Imām* at all;
- Believing that the act of sinning is analogous to *Kufr* and that every grave sinner (one who had committed a major sin in Islām) was regarded as a *Kāfir* (Disbeliever) unless he repents, otherwise he is bound to eternal life in Hell.(1)

These three principles formed the core beliefs of the Kharijites who were not in disagreement over the principles themselves but there was some disagreement on the application of them amongst the group. (2) In detailing the consensus of opinions reached by the Kharijites, Abū Al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī says: "The Kharijites agreed that the infidelity of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) should be ruled, although they differed on whether

(1) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Path of the People of Prophetic Example of All the Groups], p. 291.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 291.

his infidelity constituted *Shirk* (believing in other than Allāh) or not. They concurred that anyone who had committed a *Kabīrah* (Major sin in Islām) was a disbeliever for breaching the rules of the Qur'ān; this was with the exception of the *Najadāt* sect, whose name can be traced to Najdah bin 'Āmir al-Ḥanafī, who did not propound this doctrine. Thus, the Kharijites agreed that Allāh, the Sublime, eternally punished the committers of grave sins (except for the accomplices of Najdah, as we just mentioned).(1) On that, al-Muqaddisi says: "The essence of their school of thought (i.e. the Kharijites) was denouncing 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) as an infidel, disowning 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (may Allāh be pleased with him), declaring sinning an act of disbelief and dissenting from the unjust leader."(2)

The Kharijites persisted in their fight against the Umayyad State and were at times victorious until they were critically overcome by the State that shattered their stronghold. As soon as 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz arrived on the scene, his approach was to enter into negotiations with the Kharijites and only used force to suppress them when necessary. 'Umar would vilify heated argumentation and confrontation and instead opted for discussion and debate. Thus, he said: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."(3) And he said: "Successful is he who restrains

(1) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

(2) *Al-Bud'a wal-Tārīkh* [The Onset and History] (5/135); *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Path of the People of Prophetic Example of All the Groups], p. 292.

(3) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

argumentation, anger and greed."[1] Accordingly, 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) forbade fruitless argumentation in place of which he promoted discourse as the best means for settling disputes. It is no surprise that that there are many famous sayings attributed to 'Umar from his dealings with the Kharijites and their disputes and in that manner he invalidated their arguments through proof and by clarifying the truth for them. Furthermore, his approach serves as proof of his love for the *Sunnah* and adherence of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) (may Allāh have mercy on them).[2]

His Stance on the Kharijites' Dissension from Him:

Hishām bin Yaḥyā al-Ghasānī narrated from his father that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to him concerning the Kharijites stating: "If their plan is to travel through the land without causing any corruption on the Muslim communities or on any of the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule) and without cutting off from the way of the Muslims then they can go wherever they want. However, if their plan is to fight, then by Allāh, even if my first-born sons were to turn against the Muslim community, I would spill their blood for which I would solicit Allāh's Pleasure and the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 291;. *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/671).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1/693).

Abode of the Hereafter."(1) Another narration states: "I swear by Allāh! Even if you were my first-born sons and you wanted us to publicly spread what we are verging on, I would pour your blood forth seeking Allāh's Face and the Abode of the Hereafter. Indeed, He says: [*That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief (by committing crimes). And the good end is for the 'Muttaqūn' ('Pious')]* (*al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28:83) This is my advice to if you want it and in the event that you suspect me then present what it is you suspect exactly with advisors. May peace, blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you."(2)

'Umar's strategy and approach can be discerned from the above account relating to his correspondence with the Kharijites and despite their rejection of him as the rightful caliph, he was not stirred by them but instead wrote to them to warn them against breaking off from the community who were the people of truth. Allāh commands unity and forbids dissent, and He made the unity of the *Ummah* a proof. Thus, if the people are agreed on a leader, they are obliged to obey him and not dissent from him, whilst He did not command disobedience or to make open displays of *Kufr* (Disbelief)."(3)

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 75; *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 99-100.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/695).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/695).

'Umar's choice of strategy and words elucidates the way of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* in dealing with the Kharijites who were in fact the first group to break off from the community in Islāmic history, but this did not faze 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz despite their repudiation of him as the true caliph. Thus, he did not send assault upon assault against them but rather granted them the opportunity to come back to the truth in the same manner that the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, did in dealing with the Kharijites when they repudiated him.[1]

His Dialogue with the Kharijites:

'Umar's stance in general and his stance with the Kharijites in particular is elucidated by those who wrote to him and to whom he wrote back requesting a dialogue with them if they were prepared to do so, which he found that some of them were. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm says: "'Umar wrote to the Kharijites: 'From 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* to this party, to proceed: I advise you to have *Taqwā* (consciousness; fear) in Allāh Who says: [*And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he could never imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allāh then He will suffice him. Verily, Allāh will accomplish his purpose. Indeed, Allāh has set a measure for all things]* (*aṭ-Ṭalāq,* 65: 2-3) Your letter has reached me and that which you wrote to Yaḥyā bin Yaḥyā and Sulaymān bin Dawūd. Verily, Allāh says: "*And who does more wrong that the one who invents*

(1) *Ibid* (2/696, 687).

a lie against Allāh, while he is being invited to Islām? And Allāh guides not the Ẓālimūn (Transgressors; Polytheists)." (*aṣ-Ṣaff*, 61:7) And He says: "*Invite (mankind, O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islām) with wisdom (i.e. with Divine Revelation and the* Qur'ān*) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Knower of those who are guided."* (*an-Naḥl*, 16:125). And He says: "*So, be not weak and ask not for peace (from the enemies of Islām) while you are having the upper hand. Allāh is with you, and he will never decrease the reward of your good deeds.*" (Muḥammad, 47:35)

Verily, I call you to Allāh and Islām, to establish the *Salāh* (prescribed prayers), give the *Zakat* (prescribed alms), and to enjoin good and forbid evil, Allāh willing – and there is no power or might except with Him. I call you to support what did not result in the spilling before your days that was without force or revulsion. I remind you by Allāh that you are like us in the Book of the Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that we invite you to them both. This is our sincere advice to you and should you accept it then that is what we had wished for, but if you reject it on the grounds of its contents then let your advisors present your dispute to us. In that event, it will not considered as taking from the right of Allāh, as the righteous servant said to his nation: "*But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a Great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)*" (*Hūd*,

11:3), And He says: "*Say (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'This is my way; I invite to Allāh with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allāh, i.e. Islāmic Monotheism with sure knowledge). And Glorified and Exalted is Allāh (above all that they associate as partners with Him). And I am not of the 'Mushrikīn' (Polytheists; Idolaters).*" (*Yūsuf,* 13:108)[1]

The narration reports then after the Kharijites had read 'Umar's letter, they sent two men to speak to him instructing them that if he complies with them then they were to do the same, otherwise if he refuses then Allāh lies ahead of him. Thus they sent a slave of the *Banī* Shaybān by the name of 'Āṣim and one of their own men from the *Banī* Yashkur, who as they entered upon 'Umar said: "Peace by upon you" and sat down. 'Umar responded: "Inform me of the reason for your coming out here and why it is that you are hostile towards us." 'Āṣim, who was incidentally Abyssinian, said: "We are not hostile towards you in your endeavours to establish justice and excellence but inform us about the assumption of your role, do you have the satisfaction and consent of the Muslims or is it that their leadership is just presented to them?" He said: "I do not question them about leadership neither do I impose anything on them against their will. A man entrusted me with a covenant I never asked him about either in secret

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 79-80; *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 99; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/701).

or in public; nevertheless, I undertook the matter and no one ever denied me or disliked me because of it except for you (lot), even though you consider contentment to be in justice and fairness towards the people. If I infringe the truth or deviate from it then you are not required to obey me."

The two Kharijite ambassadors said: "Between us and you is a matter that if you grant it to us, you are from us and we are from you, but if you forbid us, we are not from you and you are not from us." 'Umar asked: 'What is it?" They answered: "I have seen that you have gone against the actions of your *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family) and pursued an alternative path in the name of redressing grievances. If you claim to be on the path of guidance and that they have gone astray, then surely you should disown and condemn them. That is what will either bring us together or divide us." 'Umar then said: "I know or assume that you do not want from this world but that it is the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) you desire, although you have made an error in your choice of path. I ask you about a matter and, by Allāh, you must be honest with me in what you really believe." They said: "We will." So 'Umar continued: "Do you not consider Abū Bakr and 'Umar your predecessors and among those who you follow and testify to for salvation?" They said: "Of course." So he said: "Do you know that the Arabs apostatized after the passing of the Prophet (peace and blessings upon them) and so Abū Bakr fought against them, spilt their blood, took their families captive and seized their wealth?" They replied: "That is what he did." So 'Umar said: "And do you know that when 'Umar assumed the caliphate

after him, he returned those captives to their clans?" They said: "This is what he did." Then 'Umar asked: "So did Abū Bakr disown 'Umar, or vice versa?" They answered: "No." He went on: "Then do you disown either of them?" Again, they answered in the negative, at which point 'Umar asked: "So tell me about the people of Nahrawān. Are they not your predecessors and amongst those you follow and testify to for salvation?" They answered: "Of course." 'Umar said: "Then do you know that when the people of Kūfah went out to them, they took them by their hands, did not make them feel unsafe, did not spill their blood and did not seize their money?" They replied: "That is what happened." He went on: "Do you know that when the people of Baṣrah went out to them in the company of 'Abdullah bin Wahab ar-Rāsibī[1], the people massacred them without much ado and then turned their attentions to 'Abdullah bin Khabbāb, the Companion of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who they butchered along with his slave maid with her child in her womb. They then moved on to some 'Arabs belonging to the *Banī* Qaṭiyyah tribe killing their men, women and boys and even throwing their children into pots and boiling them?" They answered: "That is what happened." 'Umar said: "Did the people of Kūfah disown the people of Baṣrah or vice versa?" They answered: "No." So 'Umar said: "Do you reprimand any of the two groups?" They said: "No." 'Umar said: "Tell me, do you consider the *Dīn* (i.e. Islām) to

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/703).

be one or two?" They said: "One, of course." He said: "Then, is there something that makes you unable to be content with me?" They said: "No." He asked: "How is it that you are able to follow Abī Bakr and 'Umar while both of them followed their Companion even those their approaches differed? Or how were the people of Kūfah able to follow the people of Baṣrah, and vice versa, despite their differing on the most significant matters like blood, women and money, yet you claim to be unable to accept me without first cursing my *Ahl al-Bayt* and disowning them? If cursing sinners was an obligation, it would be necessary for us to do so. So tell me, O spokesman, when do you vow to curse *Fir'awn* (Pharaoh) if you say that cursing is important?" He answered: "I never mentioned when I would do that." 'Umar remarked: "Woe unto you! Then you are able to leave cursing *Fir'awn,* yet you claim that you cannot accept me except after cursing my *Ahl al-Bayt* and disowning them? Woe unto you, you ignorant people! You wanted something but you are in error and you accept from the people what the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refused them, while you refuse them what he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed them. You make the one who felt scared before the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) feel safe while you scare the one who felt safe with the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." They answered: "We do not do that." 'Umar said: "On the contrary! You decided to do that now. Do you know that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent a message to the people who

worshipped Awthān calling them to renounce Awthān and declare that there is no one worthy of worship but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, whereby whoever complied, his blood was spared and he was granted protection? This was an example for the Muslims to go by, or do you challenge that?" "Not at all", they answered. 'Umar then said: "Are you, then, not reprimanding those who denounced Awthān and declared that there is no one worthy of worship and that Muḥammad is His messenger and servant? Are you not cursing them, murdering them and declaring their blood lawful whilst joining with those who decline that from among the Jews and Christians whose blood you deem unlawful and to whom you grant protection?" So the Abyssinian replied: "I do not need to be shown any more proof than what you have already given. I declared that you are on the truth and that I am clear of those who contest you." He then said to ash-Shaybānī: "And what do you say?" He answered: "You could not have said or described things better; however, I hate to instruct the Muslims on matters that I do not have proof for until I refer to them, as perhaps they have some proof that I am not aware of." So he said: "You know best." 'Umar then ordered that the Abyssinian be granted a gift and he stayed with him for fifteen days, after which he died. Ash-Shaybāni rejoined his people and was killed alongside them.[1]

Another narration tells of two Kharijite men entering upon

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(1) *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* [The Descendants of Nobles] (8/211-15); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/704).

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and saying: "Peace be upon you, O human!" 'Umar replied: "Upon you peace, O humans!" They then said: "Obedience to Allāh has the most right to be abided by." 'Umar said: "Whoever ignores that is wayward." They said: "Money not belonging to the State between the rich?" He said: "They are forbidden it." They said: "The money of Allāh is allocated to His people." 'Umar said: "Allāh conveyed the details of that in His Book." They said: "Establishing prayers on time?" He said: "That is one of its rights." They said: "Forming rows in the prayers?" He said: "That is in completion of the *Sunnah*." They said: "Verily, we have been sent to you." He said: "Speak without fear." So they said: "Convey the truth to the people." He said: "Allāh ordered that before you did." They said: "There is no rule but God's." 'Umar said: "That is certainly true if it is not pursued falsely." They said: "Do you appoint trustees?" He said: 'They are my helpers." They said: "Beware of betrayal." He said: "The thief is chanceful." They said: "And alcohol and pig meat?" He said: "The people of *Shirk* (Polytheism) befit it most." They said: "So whoever enters into Islām is granted security?" He said: "If it were not for Islām we would not be safe." They said: "The people who entered into treaties with the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?" He said: "Do not burden them with more than they can bear. Allāh says: "*Allāh burdens not a person beyond his scope.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:286) They said: "We are reminded by the Qur'ān. Allāh says: "*And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allāh*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:281) They said: "We are reluctant to travel

on our messenger steeds." He said: "There is no money of Allāh that is not good enough for you two." They said: "We do not have money to spend." He said: "You two have the expenditure of wayfarers."(1)

'Arṭa'ah bin al-Mundhar said: "I heard Abī 'Awn say: 'People from Ḥarūriyyah entered upon 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and began to speak to him about something, upon which some of 'Umar's companions signalled him to be harsh with them and change his behaviour towards them. However, 'Umar continued to treat them gently until he got what he wanted from them and they were mutually satisfied with his kind treatment of them, at which point they left having reached a fair agreement. After they had gone out, 'Umar hit the knee of his companion sitting next to him and said: "O friend! If you can apply some medicine apart from scalding to cure your friend then do it, but never ever scald as it won't work!"

One narration states that when Shawdhab, also known as Bustām, from the *Banī* Yashkur (tribe) set out against 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān in 'Irāq, during the caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, from his location by the River Jūkhī in East Baghdad with a cavalry of eighty of the most skilled horsemen, 'Umar wrote 'Abd al-Ḥamīd informing him to not take action except if blood had been spilt or corruption had been spread. He said: "If they do then come to a resolve

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 147; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/704).

between that and them by sending a resolute, sound man to them who you have advised of your wishes." Accordingly, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd assigned Muḥammad bin Jarīr bin 'Abdullah al-Bajlī with two thousand men from Kūfah and ordered to do as 'Umar had said. At the same time, 'Umar wrote to Bustām calling him and enquiring to him about his whereabouts. As 'Umar's letter reached him so did Muḥammad bin Jarīr, upon which he neither took action against him nor provoked him.

In 'Umar's letter to him, it said: "Indeed, it has reached me that you set out for Allāh and His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in anger, whilst you are the first to do that against me. Give us your opinion; if we are in the right then you accept what the people accept and if you are in the right, we will take your affair on board." Subsequently, Bustām ceased to take any action and wrote to 'Umar: "You have been just. I have therefore dispatched two ambassadors to you to make enquiries and look into the case with you."

The two men sent to 'Umar by Shawdhab were Makhdūj, a slave of the Banī Shaybān, and a man from the Banī Yashkur who were both chosen after 'Umar had requested that two men be sent to him for the purpose. Thus, when they entered upon him, they looked at 'Umar and said: "Inform us about Yazīd. Why did you make him the caliph after you?" He said: "It was out of my hands." They said: "Have you not considered that if you appointed someone not from your own choice then you would have entrusted it to someone unfit for it? Do you

then reckon that you have upheld your trusteeship to those who entrusted you with it?"(1) In conjecture of this, narrations state: "The Banī Marwān tribe were scared that 'Umar would confiscate what they possessed of money and that he would relinquish the caliphate from Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, which is why they set out to poison him. Before long, he died on the day that he had resolved to hand over his answer to the commissioners.(2)

The aforementioned accounts confirm that 'Umar's attitude with them was the correct one and was the same attitude that our pious Forebears adopted, such as Ibn 'Abbās and the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh have mercy on them both). It appears that 'Umar had been eager to suppress those Kharijites, which is why he left no room for suspicion by squashing them, exposing their falsity and revealing their defects.(3) He did not, therefore, continue to dispute with them about the truth but instead he demanded an extension, only he died before they had concluded the matter. When the Kharijites used force against the Governor of Irāq, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, further enabling them to drive away the Governor's army, 'Umar hastily sent Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik at the head of army made up of the people of Shām (Levant) and he wrote to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd: "It has reached what your army

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] (7/460).

(2) *Ibid; Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 97.

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/711).

did – what an evil army! I have accordingly sent Maslamah, so become comrades." Maslamah advanced at the head of his forced to the military base of the Kharijites, upon which a battle ensued between the two sides that resulted in the victory of the "Caliphate's Army."(1) Had 'Umar employed force to supress this particular band of the Kharijites, it would never have been possible for him use the same severity against them all. Hence, he was always ready to enter into dialogue with his opponents and he never allowed bloodshed.(2)

The Leading Causes for Fighting the Kharijites:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not order waging war against the Kharijites on the grounds of their differences in opinion, nor did he do that when they opposed and insulted him. Rather, he persevered with them in the hope that Allāh might have guided them to the correct path. It was not until it reached a dangerous level with the appropriation of money, spreading fear and spilling blood that he ordered fighting against them.(3)

Returning the Property of the Kharijites to its

(1) *Āṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/358); *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 94.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 94.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jursiprudnce of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr. Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/469).

Owners:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not capture the Kharijites' women and children neither did he deem their wealth lawful but, contrary to that, he returned all their possessions to their deserving owners. Thus, he wrote to his official dealing with the Kharijites: "If Allāh makes you triumphant over them, be sure to return their goods that you obtain on the way to their deserving owners."[1] This was in fact the opinion of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib in not taking their women and children as captives and not deeming their wealth lawful.[2]

Imprisoning Kharijite Captives until They Changed:

Having fought against them in battle, some of them were killed and some were taken captive. 'Umar thereby ordered the captives to be imprisoned until they changed their stance, reverted to the truth and abandoned their deviant ideas.[3] It was during his imprisonment of them that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz died.[4] This was 'Umar's approach and jurisprudence in dealing with the Kharijite opposition.

The Shi'ites:

They maintain the view that righteousness belongs to

(1) *Ibid* (2/471).

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid* (2/473).

(4) *Āṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5/358); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jursiprudnce of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr. Muḥammad Shaqīr (2/473).

those who exclusively give preference to 'Alī over the Rightly-Guided caliphs before him (may Allāh be pleased with them all) and consider his *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family) as having the most right to caliphate.[(1)] I have spoken about the Shi'ites in much detail in my book on the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him).

The Shi'ite faith split into numerous different branches among which are a number of *Ghulāt* (derived from the word *Ghalūw* meaning "to exaggerate) fell outside the fold of Islām because of their "exaggerated" veneration of certain figures. The main divisions among them are: the Kaysanites, the Saba'ites, the Imamites, etc. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is reported as having spoken about the Shi'ite *Ghulāt,* about which he said: "I do not know the goodness of the Banī Hāshim and they (the *Ghulāt*) are corrupt in their extreme zeal towards them.[(2)] Whoever urges love for them is corrupt and whoever urges dislike of them is righteous because they staunchly believed in the return."[(3)]

'Umar received a letter from his official over Kūfah informing him of the disobedience of its citizens, so 'Umar wrote back: "Do not demand obedience on the grounds of abandoning 'Alī bin 'Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him)

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(1) *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists], p. 65; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/711).

(2) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/728).

(3) *Ibid.*

for he was a righteous *Imam* (leader)."[1] Isḥāq bin Ṭalḥah bin Ash'ath reported: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz dispatched me to Irāq with the instructions: 'Read to them and do not delve into it with them. Speak to them and do not listen to what they have to say. Teach them and do not learn from them." 'Umar composed much poetry in line with his sound doctrine of belief that supports claims of his brilliance. Some verses ascribed to him speak of the exaggerated, corrupt beliefs attached to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, for instance, he said:

"Are the *Imams* not from the Quraysh
'Alī and three of his sons?
They were descendants, it was no secret.
Thus they were recognised for having faith and righteousness
Then they claimed they were concealed in Karbala'
And that they did not even taste death
Until they ride on horseback and raise the banner."[2]

Adh-Dhahabī says that az-Zubayr bin Bakkār said about Kathīr: "He was a Shi'ite who believed in the reincarnation of the soul, reciting the verse: "*In whatever form He willed, He put you together.*" (*al-Infiṭār*, 82:8) He staunchly believed in the return, in other words, the return of 'Alī (may Allāh be

(1) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/729).

(2) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Divisions] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/734).

pleased with him) to the earth."[1] 'Umar did not give much attention to refuting the Shi'ite *Ghulāt* in the same way that he concerned himself with refuting the *Qadariyyah* and Kharijites. Nevertheless, 'Umar insistently warned against sitting in the gatherings and company of advocators of *Bid'ah* (innovation) and *Ahwā'* (heretic tendencies; sects).[2]

The main beliefs of the Shi'ite *ghulāt* are:

Propounding the necessity of 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib's Imamate (may Allāh be pleased with him), his superiority and favour over the rest of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stipulated 'Alī's Imamate;

- Asserting the infallibility of the prophets and *Imams* **in spite of committing major and minor sins;**
- Championing and condemning in word and action, i.e. championing 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) and condemning the *Ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), especially the three caliphs (may Allāh be pleased with them).[3]

If one desires to refute the above beliefs, refer to my book on 'Alī bin 'Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him).

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(1) *Bil-Khashab Minhāj as-Sunnah* [With Firmness: The Way of the Prophetic Path] (1/36).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2/733, 734).

(3) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl ash-Shī'ah bayna al-Furuq* [The Middle Way between the Shi'ite Followers], pp. 293-4.

The Qadariyyah during the Era of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

Definition of the term "*Qadariyyah*": There are general and specific connotations attached to the term:

1) **"*Qadariyyah*" in the specific sense:** They deny decree, i.e. they deny Allāh's decree of servants' actions or some of them. They maintain: "There is no decree (from Allāh)" and man had his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act.

2) **"*Qadariyyah*" in the general sense:** They challenge Allāh's Knowledge, Books, Will, Decree and Creation without knowledge and thereby contradict authorized texts and the understanding of the pious Forebears.[1]

The Original Claim of 'Qadar' in Islām:

Jābir bin Samra (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I fear for my *Ummah* in three things: Going astray after having recognised the truth; being misled by trials and ordeals; and the base desires incited by lust and hunger."[2] Likewise, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) warned against argumentation and hypocrisy in the Religion in general and with regard to *Qadar*

(1) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Waṣṭiyyah, p. 19.
(2) *Musnad* Aḥmad (590/); authenticated by al-Albānī in *Salsalat aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 1127.

in particular, abandoning some of the *Ayāt Allāh* (Verses of Allāh) and authentic *Aḥadīth* (narrations of the Prophet), and dubious or contradictory traditions on the topic of *Qadar* (decree). Aḥmad narrated in his *Musnad* on the authority of 'Amr bin Shu'ayb who narrated it from his grandfather: "The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) went out one day as the people were discussing the issue of *Qadar* and it was as if a pomegranate had burst open on his face, it was that red with anger, upon which he said: 'What is wrong with you that you would implicate part of the Qur'ān against another part? This was the downfall of those before you."(1)

The Emergence of a Succession of Groups and their Contentions in the First Century up until the Qadariyyah:

After the emergence of the first group, the Kharijites, in 37-40 AH, which was succeeded by the Shi'ites who took to the forefront until just after 62 AH, the star of the *Qadariyyah* – which bore a resemblance to that of the Christians and Zoroastrians – was brought forth by Ma'bad al-Juhāni, the consequence of which brought about contentions over his ideas. As Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The extent of the *Bid'ah* (innovation) in the beginning was a handbreadth but it later adopted more and more followers until it expanded to cubits and miles across the leagues."(2)

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(1) *Musnad* Aḥmad (2196 ,178/).

(2) *Al-Fatāwā* (8425/).

The Qadariyyah's First Appearance:

Contentions presented themselves over the temple of al-Juhani and his followers in 80 AH, then Ghaylān ad-Damashqī and his followers in 105 AH. In brief, these figures alleged that Allāh, the Sublime, did not predestine the actions of slaves nor had they already been "written." In that sense, they claimed: "There is no decree (from Allāh)" and that man had his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act. The first claims of this sort were made some time after 63 AH, which is marked as the date that the *Qadariyyah* first appeared on the scene in history. Thus, the original *Qadariyyah* were those who denied Allāh's prior Knowledge of things, claiming that He has not predestined man's actions, neither does He know what man is going to do and in that way they have not been "written" or recorded on the *Lawḥ al- Maḥfūẓ* (Preserved Tablet). By denying the existence of fate and contending that Allāh, the Almighty, does not have knowledge of events beforehand, their belief indicates that He is not aware of things until after they come to pass and this is clear negation of His prior Knowledge. It is an unmistakable aberration, disbelief in Allāh and denial of indisputably established religious facts. Some of them even go as far as to say: "Allāh did not create evil", and it is on this understanding that the Mu'tazilites successively took their stance.(1) The contentions of the

(1) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Wasṭiyyah, p. 25.

Qadariyyah can be summarised in two statements:

- Man had his own will and power created by Allāh – to will and act or not to will and not to act – thereby claiming that Allāh is not aware of things until after they come to pass and this is clear negation of His prior Knowledge.(1)
- Their assertion that Allāh, the Sublime, has not written down the *Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* (Preserved Table) or people's actions beforehand.(2)

The first chief proponents of the *Qadariyyah* were:

- Ma'bad al-Juhani (d. 80 AH): In his work *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb,* Ibn Ḥajar cites some of the sayings ascribed to the deviant and heretic groups of this era, saying: "Abū Ḥātim said: 'He was the first to speak on the issue of *Qadar* (decree) in Baṣrah, making him the chief founder of this sect. He later moved to al-Madīnah where he spread his corruption to the people.(3)
- Ghaylān ad-Damashqī (killed in 105 AH): He was the second man after Ma'bad al-Juhani to head the *Bid'ah* (innovation) of the *Qadariyyah* whose murder was witnessed in Shām (Levant) on account of his deviated teaching.(4) Ghaylān did not merely propagate

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(1) *Al-Fatāwā* (7385/).

(2) *Ibid*, extracted from *al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Dr. Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 30.

(3) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (10/225).

(4) *Al-Qadariyyah wal-Murji'ah* [The *Qadariyyah* and Murjites] by Dr. Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 32.

the teachings of Ma'bad al-Juhani but he went further in his discussion of the Divine Attributes, of which he negated some, such as the Allāh's establishment on the Throne and the doctrine of the unity of Divine Essence and Attributes.(1) To him is attributed the argument that *Imān* (belief) is *Ma'rifah* (knowledge) and that actions cannot constitute *Imān.* He also advocated the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān.(2) This laid the foundations for al-Ja'ad bin Dirham who followed on from him, and subsequently, the foundations of the Jahmites and Mu'tazilites. These groups adopted their doctrines and expanded and adapted them in continuation of the *Bid'ah* (innovation). It is said that the first person to deny Allāh's establishment on His Throne and negate some of His Attributes was Ghaylān ad-Damashqī (d. 105 AH) or al-Ja'ad bin Dirham (killed in 124 AH), while others maintain it was al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān (killed in 128 AH). Denial of Allāh's establishment on the Throne ties in with al-Ja'ad's erroneous teachings that deny His Speech and Intimacy, which makes it more likely that he was the first person to have maintained that Allāh, the Sublime, is not firmly established on the Throne, a doctrine which was probably then adopted by al-Jahm who put it forth.(3) It was this doctrine that primarily sparked the people

(1) *Dirāsāt fīl-Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251

(2) *Ibid*, p. 250.

(3) *Al-Fatāwā* (520/); *Dirāsāt fīl- Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251.

who followed their heretic tendencies to violate Allāh's Attributes through their crooked interpretation and denial. They even went as far as to extend their doctrine to deny Allāh's Hand, Eye, Face, and so on.(1)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Stance on Ghaylān ad-Damashqī:

'Amīr bin Muhājir narrated: "'It had reached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that Ghaylān bin Muslim was talking about *Qadar* (decree) so he summoned him and confined him for a number of days, after which he had him brought out and said: 'Ghaylān, what is this I have been hearing about you?' At that point, I signaled Ghaylān not to say anything but he said: 'Yes, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. Verily, Allāh, the Sublime, says: "*Has there not been over man a period of time when man was nothing to speak of? We created man from a drop of mingled fluid to put him to the test; We gave him hearing and sight; We guided him to the right path whether he was grateful or not.*" (*al-Insān,* 76:1-3) Or at the end of the *Sūrah* (Qur'ānic chapter) where Allāh says: "*But you will only wish to do so if Allāh wills – Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise - He admits whoever He wills into His Mercy and has prepared torment for the disbelievers.*" (*ibid*: 30-31) 'Umar therefore asked: 'What are you saying, Ghaylān?' He answered: 'I am saying that I was blind and He gave me sight. I was deaf and he gave me

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(1) *Dirāsāt fil-Ahwā' wal-Furuq wal-Bud'a* [Studies in Heretic Tendencies, Sects and Innovations], p. 251.

hearing. I was lost and he guided me.'"[1] In another narration, it states: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz summoned Ghaylān and said: 'O Ghaylān! It has reached me that you speak about *Qadar*?' He answered: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* They are telling lies about me'. 'Umar then said: 'Ghaylān. Recite the first part of *Yā-Sīn,* so he began: "*Yā-Ṣīn By the Qur'ān, full of wisdom.*" (*Yā-Ṣīn,* 36:1-2), up until [*Verily, We have put on their necks iron collars reaching to their chins so that their heads are raised up. And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up so that they cannot see. It is the same to them whether you warn them or you warn them not, they will not believe.*" (*ibid,* 8-10) So Ghaylān said: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* By Allāh, it is as if I have never recited it before today. I declared to you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* that I am repentant for what I used to say'. At that point, 'Umar supplicated and said: 'O Allāh! If he is honest, make him firm and if he is a liar then make him a sign for the believers'."[2]

There are, in fact, many narrations detailing the conversations that took place between 'Umar and Ghaylān including a long *ḥadīth* about the doctrine of belief of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* concerning *Qadar* in which 'Umar debates with the *Qadariyyah* and questions them about

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2750/).

(2) *Al-Ibānah* [The Presentation] (2235/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2749/).

knowledge in reaction to their arguments on the Knowledge of Allāh. Thus, they recited to him and made deductions that they then concluded in denial and disbelief. Subsequently, 'Umar said to Ghaylān ad-Damashqī: "What do you say about knowledge?" He said: "Knowledge has been exhausted." So 'Umar remarked: "In that case, you are defeated. Now go and say what you want. Woe unto you, O Ghaylān! If you draw on any knowledge, you challenge it and if you dispute it, you disbelieve. To acknowledge it and make deductions from it is better for you than to dispute it and disbelieve."(1)

Perhaps 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first person to take such an approach with the likes of the *Qadariyyah* in questioning them about knowledge. Even so, this became the way of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* after him, as 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on) exemplified the clear Qur'ānic Verses in his response to Ghaylān that speak of refuting those who make false claims about *Qadar.* Allāh says: "*So, verily you (pagans) and those whom you worship (idols) cannot lead astray [turn away from Him any one of the believers" except those who are predestined to burn in Hell!*" (*aṣ-Ṣaffāt,* 37:161-3) Ibn Ḥajar (may Allāh have mercy on him) says in discussing the interpretation of this Verse: "Here, Allāh is saying: 'O you *Mushrikīn* (who associate partners with Allāh)! Not one of you worships these idols and images that you are obsessed with and deluded by, except that I already had Knowledge from beforehand of your entering into the Hellfire."(2) In his letters

(1) *As-Sunnah* [The Prophetic Example] by 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (2429/).
(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (23109/).

and sermons, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz confirms that Allāh, Glorified is He, is the One Who guides and leads astray, which is what the Book attests to in the Verse: "*Those who reject Our Ayāt "verses, proofs, signs" are deaf and dumb in the darkness. Allāh sends astray whom He wills and He guides on a straight path whom He wills*" (*al-An'ām,* 6:39). Other such Verses attesting to Allāh being the One Who guides and leads astray are denied by the *Qadariyyah* who conversely propound the view that it is man who guides himself if he wants or he can go astray if he wants. Without a doubt, 'Umar's refutations of the innovated views propagated by the *Qadariyyah*, whether intentionally or unintentionally, remain to be the strongest arguments in refutation of any deviation concerning *Qadar* in accordance with the Book and *Sunnah.* He demonstrated that man's actions are created by Allāh, Who predestined and wrote them down. This is what is verified in the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*, as Allāh says: [*While Allāh has created you and what you make."* (*aṣ-Ṣaffāt,* 37:96) Accordingly, the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Everything has been decreed, even incapacity and ability."[1] 'Umar also conveyed in a sermon that if a servant sins then he is required to repent for it and seek forgiveness from Allāh, the Sublime, and thereby he should not say that any sin he has done was decreed for him by Allāh. On the contrary, he should know that he is the disobedient sinner who committed his sin voluntarily without any knowledge of what Allāh has decreed, but that all

(1) *Muslim,* no. 2655.

Power, Will and Decree belong to Allāh. Moreover, there is nothing except by His Will, Might and Creation, which 'Umar used to refute the *Qadariyyah's* claims that man has his own free will to determine his own fate. 'Umar showed that while he does have free will, he can only follow it as Allāh wills.[1]

Affirming the Categories of Qadar (Decree):

The narrations mentioning 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) collectively affirm belief in *Qadar,* as well as to the four categories of *Qadar* that were agreed upon by the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) (may Allāh have mercy on them) and those who followed their understanding. Their belief was that faith is not complete, except with a complete belief in *Qadar,* that is, in the categories of Knowledge, the "Writing Down", Will and Creation. The *Qadariyyah* who were present during 'Umar's time denied Knowledge and the "Writing Down" and they were the ones about whom 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb said: "If you encounter those people, tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me."[2]

Of the statements 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made that affirm the categories of *Qadar* was his reply to the man who wrote a letter to him, in which 'Umar said: "You wrote to ask about the execution of *Qadar* by the Most Proficient, Allāh. I do not

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2770 ,769/).

(2) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān* [The Book of Faith]: The Chapter on *Qadar* (136,37/).

know what the people are saying or innovating about the execution of *Qadar* but they are talking in ignorance about it in their speeches and poems, whilst Islām absolutely does not condone their beliefs. The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned it (*Qadar*) in more than one or two narrations, and the Muslims heard it from him and they spoke about it during his lifetime. Then, after his death, they grew weak towards their Lord within themselves by claiming that some things are not encompassed in His Knowledge, they are not written down and denying His *Qadar* (decree); yet they acquire all knowledge from Him. You might say: 'Allāh did not reveal such and such a verse and He did say such and such a thing', in which case you would be saying what they say and following their interpretation based on their ignorance. After that, they erroneously maintain that there is no predetermination but that man has his own will and power created by Allāh for himself to will and act or not to will and not to act. Based on the belief that we do not have it in us to harm or benefit ourselves, they cause themselves to feel despair and fear."[1] Throughout his sermons and letters, 'Umar affirms the various categories of *Qadar* and these are given below:

- **Knowledge:**

This infers that Allāh, Glorified is He, had Knowledge of what His servants were going to do and where they will end

(1) *Al-Ibānah* by Ibn Baṭṭah (2231,232,233/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1510/).

up before He created them. He is the Ever-Knowing, which is one of His Divine Attributes and He already knows who the people of *al-Jannah* (Paradise) and *an-Nār* (Hellfire) will be, about which He says: "*And with Him are the keys of the 'Ghayb' ('Unseen'), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it.*" (*al-An'ām,* 6:59). From the *Sunnah* is the saying of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to man said to him: "O, Messenger of Allāh! Are the people of *Jannah* known from the people of the *Nār*? He (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered in the affirmative, so the man asked: "And what about the actions?" He (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) answered: "A path has been created for every person."(1)

- **"Written Down":**

In an address to the people, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "O people! Whoever of you does good, let him praise Allāh, the Sublime, and whoever does a bad deed, let him seek forgiveness from Allāh. And if you do it (a bad deed) again, then return to Allāh seeking His forgiveness, for verily nations must do what Allāh has placed on their necks and written down for them."(2) One day, 'Umar said in a sermon: "Verily, the *Dunyā* (world) is not a permanent abode. It is an abode for which Allāh wrote down its ruin and from which

(1) Muslim, no. 2649.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

its people are written to leave."[1] These narrations ascribed to 'Umar testify to Allāh's "writing down" of the occurrences of creation before He created them and that His Knowledge encompasses and extends to everything and everyone.[2] Allāh says: "*No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We bring it into existence.*" (*al-Hadīd,* 57:22) The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allāh, the Almighty, set down the fate of creation fifty-thousand years before fashioning the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was over water."[3]

- **Will:**

This implies that whatever Allāh wills is, and whatever He does not will is not. There is nothing or no one who moves or lives in the heavens and earth but Allāh has willed it, Glorified is He. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sought to clarify and emphasise this truth and denounced whoever disputed it. In a letter to his official, he wrote: "Whatever He decrees will be and whatever he wills is; whatever he does not decree will not be and whatever He does not will is not." He also used to say: "If Allāh did not will for disobedience, He would not have created Iblīs (Satan)."[4] He listened to the views of

(1) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 244.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

(3) Muslim, no. 2653.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported

Ghaylān ad-Damashqī and he disproved the errors he made, drawing on the first part of *Sūrat al-Insān*. In doing so, 'Umar requested him to recite the ending of the *Surah* following which he said: "Woe unto you, O Ghaylān! Do you hear that Allāh says: "*And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allāh wills.*" (*at-Takwīr*, 82:29). And He says: [*Allāh sends astray whom He wills and He guides on a straight path whom He wills.*" (*al-An'ām*, 6:39). And the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Verily, all the hearts of the children of Ādam are between two fingers of the fingers of the Most Merciful like one heart. He disposes of them however He wills." Then Allāh's Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O Allāh! Disposer of Hearts, dispose our hearts to Your obedience."[1]

• Creation (Bringing into Being):

Allāh, the Sublime is the Creator of all creation whatever that might be. He is therefore the Creator of the universe and its phenomena, and there is nothing likened unto to Him.[2] In conveying this point, 'Umar articulated the finest statements, drawing on Allāh's Verse: "...*they will not cease to disagree, except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy (the follower of Islāmic Monotheism)*..." (*Hūd*, 11:118-9), 'Umar wrote: "Those are the ones who do not disagree that their

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Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1519/).

(1) *Muslim*, no. 2654.

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed.] (1525/).

creation by Allāh was out of Mercy."[1] This Verse alludes to the creation of servants and their actions,[2] and therefore, Allāh says after that: [*and for that did He create them...*" (*Ibid,* 119). He wrote to 'Udayy bin 'Arṭa'ah: "Your assignment of Sa'ad bin Mas'ūd over 'Ammān was among the errors (offenses) that Allāh decreed for you and He decreed that you be afflicted by it."[3] What 'Umar determined in the previous letter sustains the Book and *Sunnah,* as Allāh says: "*Allāh is the Creator of all things*" (*az-Zumar,* 39:62), and He says: "*While Allāh created you and what you make!*" (*aṣ-Ṣaffāt,* 37:96). Allāh's Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Everything has been decreed, even incapacity and ability."[4]

The Difference between the Terms Qadar (Decree) and Qaḍā' (Fate):

It is said the correct meaning of *Qadar* is Allāh's specifying how things will be, in pre-eternality, by His Will, in accordance with His Knowledge, whereas *Qaḍā'* (Fate; Destiny) is Allāh's bringing into being through His Power that which His Will specified, like when Allāh says: [*Then he completed and finished their creation (Qaḍāhunna) as seven heavens.*" (*Fuṣṣilat,* 41:12) In other words, His creation of them by *Qadar* and *Qaḍā'* implies two inseparable commands whereby one

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 74.

(2) *Muṣnaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (11122/).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Muslim,* no. 2655.

cannot be detached from the other, as one takes the base function, specifically, *Qadar,* and the other has the evaluation and planning (fashioning) function, namely, *Qaḍā'*. Hence, any attempt to dissociate the two desires to destroy the plan and refute it.[1] It is also said that *Qaḍā'* is the prior Knowledge that Allāh governs with for all eternity, whilst *Qadar* is the occurrence of creation according to that which His Will predestined.[2] Ibn Ḥajar says: "The *'Ulamā* (scholars) maintain that *Qaḍā'* is the Eternal, All-Encompassing Power and Rule, while *Qadar* constitutes the particularities and details of that Power and Rule."[3]

Some of the scholars hold the view that there is a difference between *Qadar* and *Qaḍā',* but perhaps the most correct view is that there is no difference in meaning between the two and that each of them points to the meaning of the other,[4] such as the difference between *Islām* and *Īmān* (Faith). There is no clear evidence in the Book and *Sunnah* to indicate that there is a difference between *Qadar* and *Qaḍā'*.[5] The scholars are agreed that one may be applied to the other, but it should be noted that the word *Qadar* is

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(1) *An-Nihāyah* [The End] by Ibn al-Athīr (478/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(3) *Fatḥ al-Bāri'* [The Grant of the Creator] (11486/).

(4) *Al-Qaḍā' wal-Qadar* [Fate and Decree] by Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm al-Ḥamad, p. 29; *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(5) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

most often used in the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah,* and it is essential to believe in this pillar.[1]

Being Satisfied with Qaḍā' and Qadar:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "What has become of me today in my affairs transpired only because Allāh destined it to happen that way."[2] He would supplicate: "O Allāh! Make me satisfied me with Your Plan and bless me in Your Decree such that I no longer love hastening something You have postponed or postponing something You have hastened." And he would say: "I will continue to make supplication until it occurs and nothing happens to me except what is destined for me."[3] At the time of burying his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, he said: "We are satisfied with Allāh's Plan and we surrender to His Command. All praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds."[4] In paying respect to his son, he would say: "I seek refuge in Allāh from loving something that goes against what He loves, as to go against that is not fitting for me even it means my misfortune in what He has blessed me with."[5] The narrations reported

(1) *Al-Qaḍā' wal-Qadar* [Fate and Decree] by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Maḥmūd, p. 44.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5372/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1494/).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 97.

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1536/).

(5) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5357 ,385/); *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1537/).

on the authority of 'Umar throughout this study collectively demonstrate contentment and satisfaction with Destiny, that is, what Allāh specifically Decreed for His servant of adversities that were not on account of sins. Patience during hardships is necessary and as for being satisfied with them, that takes some work; however, is it a duty or *mustaḥḥab* (desirable; recommended)? According to two statements attributed to the companions of Aḥmad, as well as others, they verify that it is *mustaḥḥab* and not compulsory.(1) Nevertheless, there is no doubt that being satisfied with Allāh's Plan and Decree is part of having complete faith in them and it is proof of one's trust and confidence in Allāh, the Sublime. It that case, one should not regret was what had passed or rejoice over what is coming, for they both depend on what Allāh Wills to happen; rather, one should be satisfied with whatever Allāh Wills as is His Plan.(2)

The Murjites:

Contrary to the Kharijites, the Murjites (or *Murji'ah*) advocated the idea of deferred judgment of peoples' beliefs based on the doctrine that only Allāh has the authority to judge who is a true Muslim and who is not, and that Muslims should consider all other Muslims as part of the community.(3)

(1) *Majmū al-Fatāwā* [Collection of Legal Opinions] (8191/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (1538/).

(3) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Groups] by al-Baghdādī, p. 202; *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p. 294.

According to this group, "deferring" held two meanings: firstly, it has the meaning of delaying for some time, as in Allāh's saying: [*They said: 'Put him and his brother off (for a time)]* (*al-A'rāf,* 7:111), i.e. put it off and delay it; secondly, it infers granting or allowing hope.(1)

The Murjites, according to Imām Aḥmad, "are those who claim that faith consists merely of words, or what the tongue utters, and that people do not have more faith than others such that the faith of people, the angels and all the prophets (upon them peace) are one and the same. Based on this view, faith neither increases or decreases, as there is no exception to faith other than what the tongue utters – irrespective of what a person does or does not do. So long as the tongue declares it then that person is considered by the Murjites to be a true Muslim."(2) Staunch Murjites, such as Jahm and his supporters, hold the view that faith is not harmed by sinning, just as obedience is of no use if one disbelieves.(3) According to ash-Shahrastānī,(4) the first proponent of deferring, which alluded to the deferred judgment of peoples' beliefs to Allāh, was Ghaylān ad-Damashqī. However, as for the deferral ascribed to Abī Muḥammad Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad, also known as Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah, this was not in the sense pertaining to faith but rather it referred to

(1) *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1139/).

(2) *Mawqif Ahl as-Sunnah min Ahl al-Ahwā wal-Bid'a* [The Position of the People of Prophetic Tradition with regards to the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1152/).

(3) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.294.

(4) *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1139/).

deferring the judgment of the fighters among the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) to Allāh, the Sublime.[1] In his explanation, Ibn Sa'ad says: "He was the first person to speak on the subject of deferral" and he goes on to mentions how Zādhān and and Maysarah entered upon him and reproached him for what he had written in his book. He therefore said to Zādhān: "O Abī 'Umar! I wish I would have died and never written it"[2]. This book discusses deferring the case of the participants in the *Fitnah* (trials; discord) that ensued after the caliphates of Abū Bakr and 'Umar to Allāh, the Almighty.[3] Ibn Ḥajar mentions of how he was familiar with this book authored by Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad, saying: "What Al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad meant by "deferral" was not the type of deferral which the *Ahl as-Sunnah* find fault with, specifically, that pertaining to faith.[4] The chief claims that went too far in the view of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* were:

- Their advocating that actions do not amount to belief
- Saying that disobedience cannot cause harm to a person if he has faith in the same way that obedience cannot benefit a person if he disbelieves

(1) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.295.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5328/); *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'Iqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

(3) *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'Iqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

(4) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (2320/); *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'Iqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 30.

A -number of narrations on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz specifically indicate the enhancement of faith and the relevance of actions to it, which thereby refute the claims of the Murjites, especially since these narrations by 'Umar are mentioned by the scholars in their responses to the Murjites. By the same token, he (may Allāh have mercy on him) has been cited for warning against all types of *Bid'ah* (innovation), while there is no *Bid'ah* more apparent than the *Bid'ah* of the doctrine of deferral.(1) The statements made by 'Umar that we are referring to here have been quoted throughout the course of this study, such as the one where he said: "Islām has *Farā'id* (duties), *Sharā'i* (legal laws), *Ḥudūd* (Allāh's ordinaces between lawful and unlawful things) and *sunan* (ways and acts of worship). Whoever acts on all of these things completely, has complete faith and whoever does not act on them completely, his faith is incomplete. As long as I live, I shall continue to tell you about these things until you learn (act on) them. And should I die, I am not anxious to have your company."(2) And he said: "After the *Sunnah,* there is no excuse for anyone to go astray under the assumption that it is guidance."(3) And he would say: "Should Allāh cause every *Bid'ah* (innovation in the Religion) to perish by my hands and

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(1) *Wasṭiyyah Ahl as-Sunnah bayna al-Furuq* [The Path of the People of Prophetic Tradition Amidst the Groups], p.295.

(2) *Sirat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 60. *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2813/).

(3) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2814/).

every *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to live by my hands so that part of my flesh might bring that about until I die, that is easy for Allāh."[1] From the above statements, we can see how 'Umar felt a clear need and eagerness to reject *Bid'ah* no matter what it took, even if that led to his every limb being amputated.

The point here being that this is an obvious indication by 'Umar of the correct belief that faith entails acts of worship, which for him included giving special attention to his people for as long as he lived. Hence, 'Umar's understanding of faith was sound and authentic.[2] In *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt,* Ibn Sa'ad reports that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the caliphate, 'Awn bin 'Abdullah, Mūsā bin Abī Kathīr and 'Umar bin Ḥamzah (other sources also mention 'Umar bin Dhurr among them), went to him to speak about deferral. After listening to their point of view, they claimed that 'Umar agreed with what they had said to him and he did not dispute any of it.[3] However, this is not verified based on the following reasons:

- Ibn Sa'ad's report is missing a chain a narration and is therefore considered interrupted
- Because they only alleged that he agreed with them and

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5343/).

(2) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2814/).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (6339/); *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5104/).

so it is of the weak type of reporting

- Such allegations and claims do not correspond with his views given that his own narrations showed his concern with the doctrine of deferral[1]

Even supposing this narration stands the test of scrutiny, it is vital to note that 'Awn bin 'Abdullah later repented for his belief in deferral, which we know from al-Lālakā'ī who reported it from Nawfil al-Hadhlī on the authority of his father who said: "'Awn bin 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had the morals of the people of al-Madīnah and he was one their most learned in jurisprudence. He was a Murjite but he later reverted, after which he would sing:

"The moment we departed there was no doubt

We departed believing in what our Murjites said;

They said a believer was a sinful person,

Whilst they did not believe in our sins;

They said a believer's blood is lawful,

Even though the blood of believers has been made unlawful."[2]

In that case, there is no question that 'Awn bin 'Abdullah (may Allāh have mercy on him) renounced belief in the doctrine

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(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2815/).

(2) *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah* [An Explanation of the Principles of the *Ahl as-Sunnah's* Beliefs] (51077/).

of deferral and it could well have been that his advocating this belief was prior to his intimate conversation with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him).[1]

The Jahmites:

The Jahmites are affiliated with al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān, their founder, who was from Khorasān and a *Mawlā* (client) of the *Banū* Rāsib. He learned under al-Ja'ad bin Dirham and a scribe of Ḥārith bin Surayḥ, a rebel in Khorasān towards the end of the Umayyad period, to whom he attached himself.[2] Having attached himself to the theological teachings of al-Ja'ad, al-Jahm advocated making him an authority[3] and urged people to join forces with him in the year 128 AH, resulting in the battle between al-Ḥārith bin as-Surayḥ's army and the army of the Governor of Khorasān, Naṣr bin Siyyār. Al-Jahm participated in the battle on the side of al-Ḥarith and it was during the onslaught that a man fatally stabbed his mouth, causing him to die on the battlefield. Alternatively, it has been maintained that he was captured and taken to stand before Silm bin Aḥwaz[4] who sentenced him death.[5] The

(1) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2816/).

(2) *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(3) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] extracted from *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(4) *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End], extracted from *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā* [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1115/).

(5)*Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End], extracted from *Ḥaqīqat*

fundamental teachings of the Jahmites were:

1) Al-Jahm built on the teaching of al-Ja'ad bin Dirham that denied the Attributes of Allāh and advocated the createdness of the Qur'ān. Al-Jahm further developed these innovations;

2) He claimed that there can be no sharing in name and attribute between Allāh and creation, for that would necessitate al-*tashbīh* (assimilation), according to al-Jahm. Having first denied each and every attribute mentioned in the scriptures, he claimed that the only attributes that could be accepted and described Allāh with were two: creating and power, since humans cannot do these things. He believed that creating and power are the sole attributes that belong properly to Allāh.

3) The former belief led him to the doctrine of *al-Jabar* (fatalism; compulsion) for which they are called *al-Mujbirah*.

4) The claim that *Imān* (Faith) is only with knowledge of Allāh and that disbelief is only in ignorance of Him;

5) The claim that admission to *al-Jannah* (Paradise) and *an-Nār* (Hellfire) is ever-lasting;

6) The claim that the Knowledge of Allāh was an eventuality, as he believed that it was inconceivable for Allāh to know

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al-Bid'ah wa Aḥkāmihā [The Truth about Innovation (in Religion) and its Rulings] (1116/).

anything before He created it.[1]

The doctrine negating Allāh's Attributes was adopted by al-Jahm from al-Ja'ad, non-'Arab philosophers and the Simniyyah, a group of Indian heretics who propagated a particular philosophy of their own and followed a deviant school of thought.[2] Despite al-Jahm's eloquent speech, he was not knowledgeable and he never attended the sittings of the scholars. In his conversation with the Simniyyah sect, they said to him: "Describe to us your Lord, the Majestic, who you worship." He then entered his house and did not come back out to them for a number of days, following which time he said: "He is everything and everywhere; nothing is void of Him." Imām Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) narrated that a dispute took place between al-Jahm and the Simniyyah sect over affirming Allāh, the Majestic and at the end of it, al-Jahm likened Allāh to the soul that neither sees nor feels nor hears.[3] Ibn Taymiyyah says: "It is said that al-Ja'ad bin Dirham belonged to the people of Ḥarrān who were known for their large number of Saba'ites and philosophers. They also adhere to a school of thought that denies all but negative attributes of Allāh, as well as adding and distorting them. It is likely that al-Ja'ad adopted his ideas from the Saba'ites and philosophers",[4] and al-Jahm was influenced by the views of

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(1) *Tanāqiḍ Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(2) *Ẓāhirat al-Irjā' fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī* [The Phenomenon of Deferral in Islāmic History] (2/392).

(3) *Ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites] by Imām Aḥmad, p. 445-.

(4) *Al-Fatāwā* (522 ,21/); *Tanāqiḍ Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal

al-Ja'ad.[(1)]

As for their belief in *al-Jabar* (Fatalism), the Arab *Mushrikīn* (Polytheists) held this view before him, as Allāh says: [*And those who joined others in worship with Allāh said: 'If Allāh had so willed, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped aught but Him, nor would we have forbidden without (Command from) Him'. So did those before them. Then! Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?]* (*an-Naḥl*, 16:35). Allāh herein informs us of the delusion of those who object to *Qadar* (Decree; Fate) by which they argue that if Allāh, the Sublime, was unwilling for them to do something then He would deny them from doing so and make them unable to do it.[(2)] In terms of what they claim about faith equating to knowledge of Allāh, the Murjites actually held this view before them, whilst their belief in the extermination of *al-Jannah* and *an-Nār* goes back to the teachings of the Ismā'īliyyah sect, the mystics, theologians and the Jews. According to Ibn Abī al-'Azz (may Allāh have mercy on him): "Al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān talked about the consumption of *al-Jannah* and *an-Nār* without any credibility neither from the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) nor the *Tābi'īn* (second or third generation followers) who possess excellence and neither from the Imāms of the Muslims nor the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Tradition). This statement

Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(1) *Tanāqiḍ Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/131).

(2) *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* [An Interpretation of the Magnificent Qur'ān] (2626/).

of his is based on his own corrupt speculation and assumptions that deny the existence of permanent events in a manner typical of culpable theologians.[1] Generally speaking, such people tend to dismiss specific facts and evidence from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in place of resorting to speculation as proof of their arguments whereby the practice of theologians has been to adopt their knowledge and ideas from philosophers and rationalists[2] whose origins can be traced back to the Magis, Christians and Jews.

With regards to the belief that Allāh's Knowledge is an eventuality, al-Jahm quoted Ma'ad who was influenced by the ideas of a Christian by the name of Sawsan, which goes to show the credibility of their beliefs given that the proof they rely on comes from terminated communities. What they can be said of those who come after them?[3] 'Umar's refutations of the Jahmite beliefs were quoted by the scholars of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears), such as Imām Aḥmad ad-Dārimī and others, in their refutation of them. Ja'far bin Burqān narrated: "A man came to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to ask him about some of the heretical tendencies and sects and 'Umar replied: 'You should follow the religion of the young man in the Book and the religion of the Arab man and leave everything else'."[4] 'Umar also said: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of

(1) *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah aṭ-Ṭaḥāwiyyah* [An Explanation of aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's Creed], p. 420.

(2) *Tanāqiḍ Ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bid'ah fil-'Aqīdah* [The Doctrinal Contradictions of the People of Heresy and Innovation] (1/133).

(3) *Ibid* (1133/).

(4) *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2819/).

Allah be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with the *Sunnah,* adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it. Whoever is guided by it is guided and whoever seeks its help is victorious, whilst the one who abandons it and follows a path of other than the believers, Allāh will give him his due and grant him the worst fate in *Jahannam* (Hell)."[1] 'Abdullah bin al-Ḥakm said that he heard Mālik say: "'Umar's resoluteness in this respect pleases me."[2] And he said: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."[3]

These statements by 'Umar are recurrently quoted by the *Salaf* scholars to refute the Jahmites and no doubt for the purpose of refuting all rejected innovations in religion. In this manner, 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) held fast to the inclinations of the *Fitrah* (natural disposition) in affirming all the rightful Attributes and Names of the Majestic Creator. For this reason, 'Umar discouraged argumentation and dispute without knowledge, since the likes of Jahm did not arrive at their conclusions except through means of arguing without proper knowledge that cause him to go astray and lead others astray. In their refutation of the Jahmites, the *Salaf* scholars use 'Umar's arguments and proofs as indispensible

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Al-Maqālāt* [Discourses] (1/167-8).

sources adopting the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. This was the way of Ibn Taymiyyah in his *al-Fatwā al-Ḥamawiyyah* [Legal Ruling to the People of Ḥamawiyyah] wherein he mentions that Abī al-Qāsim al-Azjī narrated that Ṭarf bin 'Abdullah said: "I heard Mālik bin Anas say that if anyone refuted the *ahādīth* about Allāh's Attributes in his presence that he would say: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said...' and he mentioned the narration by 'Umar about the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and leadership after him." On the subject of this narration, ash-Shā▯bī says: "It succinctly reiterates the goodness of the *Sunnah* in bringing an end to all innovations." What he means by this is that it praises the one who follows the *Sunnah* and reproaches the one who contradicts it, while confirming the *Sunnah* of the successors and their deeds complied with the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For all these reasons, 'Umar's narration is considered important on the basis on its essential and beneficial points.(1) In his book *ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites], Imām Aḥmad also cites 'Umar's narration: "Whoever makes his religion the object of argumentation will frequently change it."(2)

The *Mu'tazilites* were influenced by the *Jahmite* doctrines

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(1) *Al-I'tiṣām* [Adherence] extracted from *Al-Athār al-Wāridah 'an 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fi al-'Aqīdah* [The Reported Statements of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on the Subject of Creed] (2822/).

(2) *Ar-Rudd 'alā al-Jahmiyyah* [Refuting the Jahmites] by Imām Aḥmad, p. 69.

on denying Allāh's Attributes and the createdness of the Qur'ān and it was on account of these commonalities that many Muslim scholars studying these groups have mistakenly called the *Mu'talizes Jahmites.* For this reason, it is necessary to warn against labelling these sects with names due to the fact that a sect does not become another sect because it shares some aspect of its beliefs. Also, if we go too far in labelling a sect with a name because it shares a belief with it, this may cause confusion and its approach will never be correct. From the intellectual perspective of accuracy and correctness, it is vital to call sects by their proper names and in no way should we borrow names from others.(1)

The Mu'tazilites:

This was the name given to the group that emerged in Islām during the first part of the second century through the person of Wāṣil bin 'Aṭā'.(2) Having embarked on a purely intellectual study of creeds and doctrines, I have come to the conclusion that all the facts point to the Mut'azilites as being the masters of *Kalām* (Speculative Theology) and the chiefs of disputation and controversy.(3)

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(1) *Qaḍiyyat ath-Thawāb wal-'Iqāb* [The Case of Reward and Punishment] by Dr. as-Samīrī, p. 34.

(2) *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* [The Meanings of the Qur'ān], p.131.

(3) *At-Tanbīh wa ar-Rudd* [Warning and Refuting], p. 50; *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī.

The Establishment of the Mu'tazilite Sect and the Origin of its Name:

A man entered upon Al-Hasan al-Baṣrī and said: "O Imām of the Religion! Our time has seen the emergence of a sect who declares major sinners apostates, namely, sub-sects of the *Kharijites*, and another group who believe in deferring the judgment of grave sinners to Allāh, the Sublime, claiming that a major sin is not harmful so long as one has faith, and those are the *Murjites* of the *Ummah.* Therefore, what is the ruling regarding that doctrine of belief?" Ḥasan al-Baṣrī thought about it for a moment but before he could give his answer, al-Wāṣil remarked: "I consider a grave sinner to be neither a believer nor a disbeliever; rather, he lies somewhere between the two such that he is not a believer or a disbeliever", at which point he stood up at an instant and withdrew from the circle of the *shaykh* (learned elder) to one of the pillars of the *masjid* (mosque). Concerning this incident, Al-Ḥasan said: "Wāṣil separated from me", upon which Wāṣil and his supporters were given the name *Mu'tazilites,* which originates from the Arabic word *I'tazala* meaning "to separate (oneself)", "to withdraw."(1) Historians unanimously agree on this point,(2) while it must be stressed that the name bears no plausible relationship with the honourable *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions). On the contrary, the *Ṣaḥābah* who dissociated and withdrew from the *Fitnah* (controversy; trials) that took place between

(1) *Al-Farq bayn al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Groups], p. 118.

(2) *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites'] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 71.

'Alī and Mu'āwiyah in the battle of the Camel (may Allāh be pleased with them) were not called *Mu'tazilites* in the same sense that the term is understood to apply to the Wāṣil and his supporters, but rather it was used only in the linguistic sense when referring to their withdrawal from the battle. This claim is supported by the fact that the *Mu'tazilites* in question were called exactly that because of their dissension and withdrawal from the teachings of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah,* whereas the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are the leaders of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah.* How then, can they be associated with each other when the *Mu'tazilites* derive their reasoning illegitimately? It is important to therefore acknowledge the mistake of one who equates the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with these *Mu'tazilites* who dissented on the ground of religion whereby they sought to worship Allāh according to their own doctrines. Quite the opposite of them, the *Ṣaḥābah* dissociated from the *Fitnah* to stay away from sinning and spare lives.[1]

What distinguishes the Mu'tazilites from the *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* is their school of thought that is intellectually dominated by rational thought and reasoning. It follows, in Mu'tazilite reasoning, that "sacred precedent" is not an effective means of determining what is true, as what is obligatory in religion is only obligatory "by virtue of reason." From this premise, they abandoned religious legal texts

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(1) *Ibid*, p. 72.

that contain unadulterated guidance and protection against deviation and perversity.(1)

The Sub-Sects among the Mu'tazilites:

Since the essence of Mu'tazlite doctrine was based on reason, which they used both to verify or deny something, and because of the Mu'taziltes' absorption with Greek philosophy that was founded on conflict and debate, disagreement began to creep in between the individuals of this sect. As a result, opinions branched out and the sect fragmented in twenty-two different sub-sects, such as the Wāṣiliyyah, 'Umrūwiyyah, Hadhliyyah and Niẓāmiyyah, to name but a few. To each sub-sect belonged its own specific *Bid'ah* (innovation) and although all of them collectively concurred on five fundamental principles, they differed on their details. Of course, this comes as no surprise given that they governed themselves by reason and inevitably the interests of one person, or group, are going to differ from another's.(2)

The Role of the Mu'tazilites in Reviving the Doctrines of Former Sects:

The Mu'tazilites were influenced by three former sects whose doctrines they revived, but in a different form, with their own emergence. These sects were: the Kharijites; the

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(1) *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites'] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 76.

(2) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 20.

Qadariyyah Ghulāt (exaggerated, extreme) factions; and the Jahmites.[1]

What did they adopt from the Kharijites?

Sentencing a Grave Sinner:

Al-Baghdādī says: "The Wāṣiliyyah and 'Umruwiyyah sects supported the Kharijites in sentencing a grave sinner to the *Nār* (Hellfire) as they considered him as being in an in-between state, claiming that he was neither a *Mushrik* (Polytheist) nor a *Kāfir* (Disbeliever).[2] It is apparent from this that the Mu'tazilites revived the doctrine of the Kharijites concerning perpetrators of grave sins in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), however, they did not rule this for *Kufr* in the *Dunyā* (this world).[3]

Dissidence from Unjust Leaders:

The Kharijites were united in their belief on the necessity of dissenting from unjust leaders with armed opposition in order to remove injustice and error and establish justice and truth, according to them.[4] In doing

(1) *Ibid*, p. 19.

(2) *Al-Farq bayna al-Furuq* [The Difference between the Divisions], p. 119; *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 20.

(3) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 18.

(4) *Maqālāt al-Islamīyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (1204/); *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* [Sects and Denominations] by ash-Shahrastānī (1115/).

so, they manipulated the tenet of faith to enjoin good and forbid evil as a means of challenging the leaders, dissenting from them and waging war with the opposition.(1) This principle was later adopted by the Mu'tazilites who theoretically revived it under the premises of enjoining good and forbidding evil. According to Abu Al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī: "The Mu'tazilites agreed on the obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil when necessary and possible by means of the tongue, hand and sword."(2) In another place, he says: "They considered dissenting from the authority obligatory when necessary and possible."(3)

The Case of Interpretation:

The Kharijites were the first to open the door of fallacious interpretation in the history of the *Ummah* whereby they forged interpretations of legal texts, texts of Divine promise and threat, and the concept of enjoining good and forbidding evil in a manner incongruent with what was revealed by Allāh. Soon after the various strands had formed between them, they each inherited this practice of false interpretation to justify their latest individual *Bi'dah* (innovations). Amongst

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(1) *Al-Khawārij Awwal al-Furuq fī at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The Kharijites: The First Sect in Islāmic History] by Nāṣir al-'Aql, p. 37.

(2) *Maqālāt al-Islamīyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (1337/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 21.

(3) *Maqālāt al-Islamīyīn* [Discourses of the Islāmists] (2157/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 21.

these groups was the Mu'tazilites who forged a metaphorical interpretation of the texts dealing with the Divine Attributes, whilst this was not a tenet of faith for the Kharijites.(1) Ibn Taymiyyah said: "The Kharijites were not accustomed to scholastic theology or metaphorical interpretation of the texts until after the emergence of the Mu'tazilites."(2) The latter group further applied this interpretation to texts on *Qadar* (Decree), which was neither done by the Kharijites. In short, the Mu'tazilites inherited the practice of interpreting from the Kharijites, which they wholly manipulated until it became a rule for dealing with the texts of the Book and *Sunnah*.

The Qadariyyah:

As for the *Qadariyyah*, the Mu'tazilites adopted the doctrine of denying *Qadar* (Fate) from them and revived it in a manner that was not as blatant as to include denying the Knowledge of Allāh, as the early proponents of the *Qadariyyah* had done. In fact, this earlier doctrine soon lost support and faded away for two main reasons: 1) because of the small number of proponents who were inclined to talk about *Qadar* in this way; and 2) due to the firm denunciation shown by the *Ṣaḥābah* who were familiar with this view and the *Tābi'īn* scholars against its proponents, which at times resulted in their disownment. This was the attitude of Ibn 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with him) who said to the person who informed him about them: "If

(1) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 22.
(2) *Ibid.*

you encounter those people, tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me."[1] Other outcomes saw them being openly disdained and belittled, such as when Ṭāwūs bin Kīsān saw Ma'bad, upon which he turned to the people around him and said: "This is Ma'bad, therefore treat him with contempt!"[2] Or some of them were even killed after they had apostated in order to put an end to spreading *Fitnah* amongst the Muslims, which is what happened with Ghaylān ad-Damashqī when he persisted in pursuing his corrupt doctrine of belief.[3] Nevertheless, the Mu'tazilah still revived this doctrine but in a less aggressive manner than its forebears. As such, they affirmed attributing Knowledge and "the Writing Down" to Allāh, although they denied the statuses of Will and Creation (Bringing into Being) based on the belief that people are the creators of their own actions and they do them if they want to without Allāh determining it.[4] On these grounds, the scholars have not declared them disbelievers, as they did with the former *Qadariyyah Ghulāt* (i.e. the extreme sects). Ibn Taymiyyah says: "As far as the *Qadariyyah* who deny the Writing Down and Knowledge were concerned, the scholars declared them disbelievers, but they did not declare it of those who affirmed Knowledge and those

(1) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Īmān* [The Book of Faith]: The Chapter on *Qadar* (136,37/).

(2) *Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl as-Sunnah* [Explaining the Creed of the People of Prophetc Example] (4/637).

(3) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fil-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 24.

(4) *Al-Qaḍā' wal-Qadar fī Ḍaw' al-Kitāb was-Sunnah wa Madhāhib an-Nās* [Fate and Decree in light of the Book , the Prophetic Example and the People's Schools of Thought], p. 117.

who did not affirm the creation of actions.[1]

The Jahmites:

The process of synchronisation and personal communication between Jahm and his supporters on one hand and Wāṣil on the other had been paved to facilitate the Mu'tazilites' adoption of Jahmite doctrines dealing with *Tawḥīd* (Oneness). This consisted of:

Negating the Attributes:

Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The origins of this discourse (around denying Allāh's Attributes) can be traced to the teachings of the Jews and *Mushrikīn* (Polytheists)." The first person to introduce these ideas into Islām was al-Ja'ad bin Dirham, which was adopted by al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān who openly professed them and for that reason the doctrines are attributed to the *Jahmites*.[2] However, the Mu'tazilites later inherited these innovated teachings from the *Jahmites* but which manifested in a less exaggerated doctrine, unlike the Jahmites who negated the Names and Attributes of Allāh.[3] Ibn Taymiyyah mentions: "Al-Jahm embellished the negation of Names with the negation of Attributes[4] and as for the Mu'tazilites, they

(1) *Al-Fatāwā* [Legal Rulings] extracted from *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 24.

(2) Al-Fatwā al-Ḥamawiyyah al-Kubrā [The Greatest Legal Ruling to the People of Ḥamawiyyah] proposed by Sharīf Hizā', pp. 478-.

(3) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 25.

(4) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the

affirmed the Names but denied the Attributes."[1]

The Doctrine of the Createdness of the Qur'ān and Negating the Sight of Allāh:

Concerning the Mu'tazilites, Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The doctrine of *Tawḥīd* (Oneness) that they subscribe to is the same doctrine as the Jahmites' which involves negating Allāh's Attributes amongst other things, such as claiming that Allāh does not see and that the Qur'ān is created."[2] These are collectively the doctrines adopted by the Mu'tazilites from the sects preceding them, namely, the Kharijites, *Qadariyyah* and Jahmites. With the emergence of their turn to revive the innovated doctrines, the Mu'tazilites made significant changes in order to take off some of the pressure that had been attached to the majority of these philosophical beliefs. Before long, fragmentation ensued and resulted in each of the sub-sects interpreting these doctrines in their own way incongruent with the rest of the Mu'tazilites but using Mu'tazilite proofs to justify their argument. [3]

The Five Tenets of Mu'tazilite Teaching:

All Mu'tazilites agree on five basic tenets that form the fundamental teachings of their dissociated school of thought.

Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 25, extracted from *al-Fatāwā* [Legal Rulings].

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*, p. 26.

(3) *Ibid.*

The first is *at-Tawḥid* (the Divine Unity; Oneness). The second is *al-'Adl* (Divine Justice); the third is *al-Wa'ad wa al-Wa'īd* (Divine Promise and Threat). The fourth is *al-Manzilah bayna al-Manzilatayn* (the Place between Two Places). The fifth is *al-'Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa an-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil).(1) Notably, the phrase Five Basic Tenet was not applied by Wāṣil bin 'Aṭā' but it was taken up by his students and finally standardised by Abī al-Hadhīl al-'Alāf after it reached the peak of popularity with the isolated sect and was therefore laid down with authorisation by Abī al-Hadhīl al-'Alāf. He went on to write about the Five Basic Tenets within his books, which later fell into the hands of Ja'far bin Ḥarb, Judge 'Abd al-Jabbār and other Mu'tazilite supporters.(2) By the time of the advent of the Abbasid State, the Mu'tazilite movement was flourishing and it had begun to send its emissaries to all quarters of the Muslim empire, inviting the people to follow their school of thought and doctrine of beliefs. Some of the founders of the Abbasid dynasty subscribed to their school, which afforded the Mu'tazilites a great deal of support and strength particularly during the era of al-Ma'mūn. For now, we shall leave discussing the Mu'tazilite principles and the position of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* until we reach our study of the Abbasid State, by the Permission of Allāh.

(1) *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 26; *Ārā' al-Mu'tazilah al-Aṣūliyyah* [The Basic Views of the Mu'tazilites'] by Dr. 'Alī aḍ-Ḍuwayḥī, p. 79.

(2) *Nasha'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fil-Islām* [The Spread of Philosophical Thought in Islām] by Dr. an-Nashār (1417/); *Ta'thīr al-Mu'tazilah fīl-Khawārij wa ash-Shī'ah* [Mu'tazilite Influence on the Kharijites and Shi'ites] by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥafṭī, p. 27.

Part V: 'Umar's Social, Intellectual and Religious Life:

His Social Life:

The Attention He Gave To His Family and Children:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz personally oversaw his children's upbringing and education and he certainly did not waive his responsibility to give them a righteous upbringing shaped by Islāmic religious teachings. We know this from the letters he wrote to his children and to those whom he assigned their disciplining.

1. Attaching them to the Holy Qur'ān:

'Umar attached his children to the Holy Qur'ān whereby he made it so that on Fridays, his children would be allowed to enter upon him before the rest of the people in order to revise the Qur'ān with them. He would therefore begin: "*Ayyuhā*" (to start the passage) and the eldest child would recite onwards, and then again he would say: "*Ayyuhā*" and the next child would continue to recite until they had all recited.[1]

(1) *Siyāsat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar's Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims], p. 52.

2. Imparting Advice to Them:

In the year that he assumed the caliphate, 'Umar sent a message to his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, who at the time was in al-Madīnah, saying: "Whoever desires *Jannah* (Paradise) and wants to escape the *Nār* (Fire) – referring to 'Abd al-Mālik and his brothers – now is when repentance is accepted and sins are forgiven before the appointed time is decreed, upon which nothing else can be offered to Allāh, no ransom will be accepted for the deeds you bear and no trick can help conceal what you secretly hid inside. Everyone will have their deeds returned to them and they will be split up into ranks. Therefore whoever obeys Allāh, [let him] repent for that Day, and woe unto him who disobeys Allāh, the Majestic."(1) In another narration of the same account, he urges his son to remember and thank Allāh, the Sublime, and to watch his speech and actions, saying: "Remember the Favour Allāh bestowed upon you and your father and if you are able to engage your tongue with remembrance, glorification and praise of Him as much as you possibly can then do so; for the best speech that you can put forth is praise and thanks to Allāh and best thing to put a stop to bad speech is giving praise and thanks to Allāh."(2)

3. Promoting Tolerance and Good Opinion:

He (may Allāh have mercy on him) would encourage

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 1156-; Abū Ḥafṣ al-Malā' (1266/).
(2) *Ibid*, p. 298.

people to have tolerance and good opinion; for verily, some suspicion is sin. It has been reported that he once said to his son, 'Abd al-'Azīz: "If you hear something about a Muslim, do not bear any of its evil."

4. Lenient Behaviour and Intelligent Conversation:

'Umar would interact with his family with leniency, without spoiling and mollycoddling them, and he would have intelligent conversation with them in which his style of speech would be persuasive and convincing in getting them to understand and in complying with their demands.(1) It is reported that his son, 'Abdullah, once asked him for clothes when he was caliph and so he sent him to al-Khayyār bin Rabāḥ al-Basrī and said to him: "Take what clothes he has for me." However, the clothes did not please 'Abdullah and so he went back to father and said: "O my father! I asked you for clothes and you sent me to al-Khayyār bin Rabāḥ who brought out clothes that neither I nor my people would wear." However, 'Umar said: "Whatever that man has is what we can have", so 'Abdullah left. This story perfectly illustrates 'Umar's moderate approach to parenting whereby he responded to his son's request without granting him his every demand. Before 'Abdullah left his presence, 'Umar called him back to give him another option, saying: "Do you want a hundred *Dirham* advancement on

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 101.

your allowance?" His son agreed to that and so 'Umar gave him the money which he deducted from his next allowance.[1]

To further depict the good manners 'Umar used with his children, one narration tells of when his daughter sent a pearl to him and said to him: "If you would like to me send me a sister for it so that I may wear them on my ears." However, 'Umar neither replied to her to comply or to refuse but instead he wanted to test her patience through sending her two embers and said: "If you are able to wear these two embers on your ears then I will send you a sister for it."[2] In this manner, his response was convincing for her.[3]

5. Being Observantly Just with Them:

One of things mentioned with respect to the good treatment he gave to his children was how he aspired to be just towards them, despite there being so many of them, so that one of them did not feel embittered or angry towards another. In fact, 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) aspired to observe justice so much so that he even preferred for Ibn al-Ḥārithah to sleep at his house for fear that he if left he would be unjust.[4] On this matter, the

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 312.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 134.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 101.

(4) *Ibid*, p. 102.

account of 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's son, has been reported, in which he says: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had a son from a woman from al-Ḥārith bin Ka'ab who he was very fond of and he would sleep at his house. One night, I confronted him and he said to me: 'Are you 'Abd al-'Azīz?' I said: 'Yes'. So he said: 'Is it evil that you have brought here? Come inside'. So I sat down on his ragged garment while he ('Umar) was praying, after which he came up to me and said: 'What is the matter?' I said: 'Nobody knows a son like his father and verily, you treat Ibn al-Ḥārithiyyah in a way that you do not treat us. I did not know why this could be other than that you might see in him something that you do not see in us'. He ('Umar) asked: 'Has someone said that to you?' I answered: 'No', so he said: 'Make a promise to me', which I did and then he said: 'Go back home'. At that point I returned to my house and as I, Ibrāhīm, 'Āṣim and 'Abdullah (all of whom were brothers) were in bed, he ('Umar) came in, followed by Ibn al-Ḥārithiyyah. We therefore said: 'What is it?' He replied: 'It is what you did to me', and it was as if he feared that he was being unjust."(1)

6. Cultivating Fine Manners and Etiquettes in Them:

'Umar would cultivate good and virtuous manners in his

(1) *Siyāsat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar's Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims], pp. 523-.

children and he would take the opportunity to ensure that he did that whenever the opportunity arose. In the contents of one of his letters (may Allāh have mercy on him) to his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, who was in al-Madīnah, he forbade him from showing pride and vanity in his speech, being pretentious and pompous, and acting as if he was superior to others. He wrote: "Beware of showing off when you talk and from being self-admiring as if your sustenance was given to you on account of your high esteem or because you are more worthy than one who was granted wealth like yours."[1]

7. Teaching His Children about Asceticism and Prudence in Life:

The parental, educative side of 'Umar's personality came to view in his ability to make his children willing to change from having a luxurious lifestyle to living a life of asceticism and abstinence, whilst further convincing them to live life like common folk in place of a life of opulence and comfort. One of the first measures he took towards this appeared in connection with a letter he wrote to 'Abd al-Mālik in al-Madīnah, in which he said: "Indeed, Allāh has afflicted you with wealth, therefore be prudent in it, set yourself towards Allāh, afford him the duties He rightfully deserves (from your wealth), i.e. paying the *Zakāt,* charity and not being wasteful – and be like the righteous servant when he said: "*This is*

(1)*Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 314.

by the Grace of my Lord – to test whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of) his own self; and whoever is ungrateful (he is ungrateful only for the loss of his own self). Certainly, my Lord is Rich (Free of all needs), Bountiful." (*an-Naml*, 27:40) This letter was sent directly after his assumption of the caliphate, that is, at a time when the extravagance and luxury of the Umayyad caliphate was abounding and it was against this backdrop that 'Umar observed such an excellent approach to teaching his children.

Thus, his style was gradual and he shared his feelings in that he considered wealth and too much money to be an affliction from Allāh, the Majestic. He thereby instructed his son to be frugal and thrifty on top of affording Allāh His rights on that wealth out of humility.[1] On another occasion, 'Umar found out that one of his sons had bought a ring for a thousand *Dirham* so he wrote to him, saying: "I was told that you have bought a ring that costs a thousand *Dirham*. So when you receive this letter, sell the ring and fill a thousand hungry stomachs (with the money you get back from it). Then buy a ring for two *Dirham* that has an iron core and have the following words inscribed on it: 'May Allāh have mercy on he who knows the limits of his own self'."[2] Here we notice how 'Umar linked his instructions to his son with feeding poor

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 106.
(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 298.

people in order to convey the sincerity of his concern so that it would be appreciated and also so that his son would always consider the poor and needy when spending money.(1)

One day, one of 'Umar's sons requested permission to get married and for it to be paid for from the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury), while this particular son of 'Umar already had a wife. 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) got angry because of what he had asked and so 'Umar wrote back, saying: "I received your letter in which you asked me pay for you to accumulate more wives from the *Bayt al-Māl,* while some of our Muslim sons cannot even afford to have one. I therefore do not know why you would write such a thing!" 'Umar later wrote to him again to advise him to sell some of his property and assets in order to help towards what he wanted to do."(2)

'Umar's was not only like this with his sons but also his daughters. It is said that 'Umar had a daughter called Amīnah who passed him one day and so he called out: "O Amīnah!" However, when she did not answer him, he ordered her to come to him, which she did and so he asked her: "Why did you not answer me?" She said: "I was undressed", i.e. she was dressed inappropriately. So he said: "O Mazāḥim! Look at that couch that we have torn. Cut some material off so that she can make a blouse out of"(3). This tells us about the

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 106.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 106.

(3) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite]* (5261/);

clothes of 'Umar's daughters, and as for their food, Ibn al-Ḥakm reports 'Umar used to pray during the first third of the night and after that he would enter upon his daughters to greet them. One day, he went to enter upon them as usual but when they heard him coming, they put their hands over their mouths and scurried to the door. 'Umar therefore asked the nanny: "What is the matter with them?" She replied: "They have nothing to make supper with except for lentils and onions, and they hate for their mouths to smell of that." At that point, 'Umar began to cry and then said to them: "O my daughters! Eating all kinds of food will not benefit you and your father will be made to cross over the Fire." They then began to cry so hard that their voices became raised, after which they went back inside."(1)

'Umar began his family's transition from living a luxurious lifestyle to a life of asceticism from the time that he deposited the jewellery and valuables belonging to his wife, Fātimah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, into the *Bayt al-Māl*. On that occasion, he said to her: "Choose to either return your jewellery to the *Bayt al-Māl* or allow me to separate from you; for verily, I despite that you, I and that all be in the same house." She said: "Of course, I choose you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* over that and I would happily give away more if I had it."(2)

An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 108.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp, 489-.

(2) *At-Ṭabaqāt* (5330/); *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-

The Importance He Attached to His Children's Education:

More than just showing an interest in his children's education, 'Umar took the necessary educational measures for ensuring that they received a wholesome education aimed at cultivating growing Muslims whose persons and aims were united so that there was no inconsistency between their words and actions, or between reality and ideal.[1] The teachings he implemented towards those goals are clarified in his letter (may Allāh be pleased with him) to his children's teacher and mentor, his close associate, Sahl bin Ṣadqah. Once he had taken the liberty to choose Sahl for the job of teaching and disciplining his children, he next determined the ideal *Manhaj* (syllabus; programme) he wanted them to be taught.[2] In that regard, he wrote: "From the servant of 'Allāh, 'Umar, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* to Sahl. Indeed, I chose you based on my own knowledge of you to educate my children and so I have thereby charged you to undertake this task from amongst many others who are close and loyal to me. I instruct you to speak to them boldly, as that will keep them attentive and on their toes. Avoid befriending them, as familiarity breeds disregard, and laugh little, since much laughter kills the heart. Let the first thing they perceive of your etiquette be your hate for the amusements of the *Shayṭān* (Satan) and the consequences

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'Azīz], p. 109.

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 110.

(2) *Ibid,* p.110.

of displeasing ar-Raḥmān (The Most Merciful). Indeed, I have been informed by reliable sources that the use of instruments, listening to music and feeling passionate about them sprouts hypocrisy in the heart just as water causes hyacinth to grow. Certainly, one would desire to abandon these things if he was conscious of how easily they can fill the heart with hypocrisy, for when one listens to music with his ears so often, the heart and mind rarely receive anything useful. Also, introduce the Qur'ān to each one of them so that they may become sound in its recitation and memorisation. When they are finished with that, given them their bows and arrows and teach them how to go out barefooted into the wild. After they fire seven shots, let them go back and have some rest. Indeed, Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) used to say: 'O son, take some rest, for only the devils do not rest.'"[1]

From the guidelines presented by 'Umar herein we are able to notice the following things:

1. *Choosing a Righteous Teacher and Mentor:*

The teacher or mentor forms the cornerstone in the teaching process, which is why 'Umar chose his children's teacher from his closest associates and confidantes based on his own knowledge of him and the confidence he had in him. However, 'Umar did not limit their education and disciplining to just the person of Sahl, but he further entrusted them to his own teachers

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 302.

and mentors, the first of which was Ṣāliḥ bin Kīsān.(1)

Of course, the person of the teacher did not stop 'Umar from overseeing and giving guidelines on how they were to be cultivated – even though some of these teachers were chosen from the highest circles of scholars at that time. 'Umar's choice of knowledgeable scholars was for the purpose of testing his children's intellect and manners, such as when he commissioned Maymūn bin Mahrān with assessing and scrutinizing the intellect his son, 'Abd al-Mālik. Regarding that occasion, Maymūn said: "We went to him – i.e. 'Abd al-Mālik – and I sought permission to enter upon him. I then sat with him for the length of an hour and I was pleased with him after our meeting."(2)

2. ***Outlining the Teaching Programme:***

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz specified the teaching programme and subject matter that he wanted his children to learn. Thus, he incorporated into the study programme learning the Qur'ān and its sciences, learning the other natural sciences, training in *Jihad* (striving or fighting in the Way of Allāh), fighting and endurance, which included archery practice, training in emergency treatment and physical exercise that they were expected to also practice in their spare time. As for the daily routine, part of it was spent reviewing and explaining

(1) *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* [The Memorial of the Hadith Masters] (1148/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 2967-.

the Holy Qur'ān, as well as whatever related to that. Another part was spent learning the other religious sciences followed by archery, specifically, shooting seven arrows as requested by 'Umar. Overall, the *Manhaj* (programme) was designed to incorporate sublime goals, combining the *Dīn* (Religion) and the *Dunyā* (World) and attending to body and soul, words and actions.(1) It is objectives like these that abjure from being futile and surpass modern education and training curricula.(2)

3. *Outlining the Method of Cultivating Manners and Directing:*

It was not enough for 'Umar to only select the right teacher for his children or to go to extra lengths to stipulate the guidelines for the teaching material; rather, he went as far as delineating the particular method, manner of execution, and levels of performance and excellence that should be adhered to with respect to cultivating manners within his children. In one of his letters to Sahl, 'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) asked him to be serious when addressing his children in order to keep them attentive and diligent. He also asked him to refrain, as their mentor, from befriending them to avoid it resulting in carelessness and disregard as it normally does, to uphold his position in their presence, for it was not the place of a teacher to take his students as friends

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī* [The Management Model], an extract from *Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 110.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 114.

with whom to divulge his secrets and share his time and life story. In fact, students do not appreciate a teacher taking this attitude and they lose respect for him because of it such that they stop responding to what he demands from them.[1] Moreover, perhaps this might lead to heedlessness and a disregard for what he says pertaining to knowledge. Similarly, 'Umar requested that the teacher dissuade his children from the allurements and amusements of the *Shaytan* (Satan) and from using and listening to musical instruments and singing, since these have a bad impact on the life of a Muslim. Notably, 'Umar did not issue orders or stipulate the attitude or method he wanted to be adopted per se; instead he let his interests and concerns be known in that regard.[2]

4. *Specifying the Times and Priorities for Teaching:*

Another aspect 'Umar incorporated into the teaching programme that he outlined in his letter to his children's teacher is what he called "time management." It is not surprising then that 'Umar devised a comprehensive timetable to be implemented daily, starting with a *Juz'* (one of thirty parts) of the Holy Qur'ān in the early hours of the morning when it is serene and the student is able to clearly reflect on its Message after having rested the night before. In this manner, 'Umar prioritised the Qur'ān to be read and studied at a time when the mind is at its purest and the learner is readily willing.

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid,* p.117.

He equally applied the same logic to other subjects in the daily programme whereby he allocated specific times for the different subjects and training practices, for example, archery would come after knowledge and studying. Of course, this was done deliberately to make them yearn for it and excel in it, along which lines they were able to successfully achieve maximum proficiency and skilfulness. At the end of the daily schedule was nap time, which is a vital part of the day for invigorating the mind, body and soul.[1]

5. *Observing the Effects of Teaching:*

'Umar bin 'Abd a-Azīz observed everything that related to knowledge, what affect something had on understanding and grasping knowledge well, and what enhances the mind's ability to grasp better. The first issue 'Umar showed a genuine concern for on the grounds of its impact on his children's knowledge, manners and morals was their teacher, the quality of his knowledge and their emulation of his etiquettes and mannerisms. The second issue was overseeing and observing that he never resorted to leniency, failed to remain serious in his speech, laughed excessively, or joked and played, as these cause a hindrance to performing what is required of teaching, in terms of giving the greatest care and attention to the tasks and achieving maximum proficiency. The third issue related to ensuring that time was not lost and wasted, which is caused by amusing oneself, singing and musical

(1) *Ibid*, p. 118.

instruments amongst other things that impede intellectual stimulation. Fourthly was observing emerging trends and behaviours, such as boredom, how these had an effect on the required level of understanding and the necessity of letting off some steam and refreshing the self every so often, which was addressed by allocating break times every now and then. The final issue was giving attention to activities that yield positive results such as exercise and archery to produce a healthy body and sound mind.[1]

The Results of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Programme on His Children's Education: The Case of His Son, 'Abd al-Mālik

An example of the results 'Umar's religion-orientated *Manhaj* (programme; method) yielded on his children's education is best illustrated in the case of his son, 'Abd al-Mālik. 'Abd al-Mālik was a typical youth who lived a comfortable life and enjoyed plenty of wealth and esteem, making his life, in this respect, like many Muslim youths of his kind. The following are but a few descriptions of his character:

1. *His Worship and Crying:*

'Āṣim bin Abī Bakr bin 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān, the paternal nephew of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, narrated: "I was sent as part of an envoy to Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik and

(1) *Ibid,* p. 119.

with us was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. I stayed with his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, who was a bachelor at the time, and so we prayed *al-'Ishā'* (Night Prayer) together then everyone retired to their beds. Soon afterwards, 'Abd al-Mālik stood up to put out the lamp and then began to pray until I eventually fell to sleep. When I woke up, he was recited the Verse: "*Think, (even) if We do let them enjoy for years. And afterwards comes to them that (punishment) which they had been promised.*" (*ash-Shu'arā',* 26:205-6). At that point, he started to cry, so he repeated again and whenever he paused from crying he would do the same until I thought that he was going to die from crying. When I saw that, I said: 'There is no one worthy of worship but Allāh and all praise belongs to Him, just as the one who wakes up from his sleep for that purpose'. When he heard me say that, he became quiet and I never heard a noise from him after that" (1) (may Allāh have mercy on him).

2. *His Knowledge, Legal Insight and Understanding:*

'Umar assembled the people together and consulted them on the subject of rectifying the injustices committed by al-Ḥajjāj, yet every man he consulted told him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* That affair was not under your authority or caliphate." Whenever that was said to him, however, he made

(1) *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Ḥuffāẓ* [A Collection of the Memorisers' Letters] by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (2479/).

the man stand until he eventually got to his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, who said to him: "Father, no man is capable of rectifying the injustices committed by al-Ḥajjāj, while not rectifying them is to take part in it with him." Upon hearing his reply, 'Umar said: "If you were not my son I would say that you were the most learned in legal knowledge among the people." This was the statement of 'Abd al-Mālik that earned his father's praise for displaying correct insight, since if the *Imām* is able to rectify injustices committed before his rule, it is in fact compulsory for him to do so in accordance with his ability.[1] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, were among the scholars who had acquired extensive knowledge on Allāh, which required fear, love and devotion to him, as well as knowledge of the *Ḥalāl* (permissible) and *Harām* (prohibited), and *Fatāwā* (legal opinions) and *Aḥkām* (legal rulings).[2]

3. *Reminding His Father of Death:*

A son of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's had passed away and upon his arrival 'Umar went and sat by his head, removed the cover from his face and as he looked at him, tears began to flow down his cheeks. His other son, 'Abd al-Mālik, then entered and said: "Does it bother you, O *Amīr,* that death should precede you? Rather, it serves the purpose of binding you to it, for it is as if you have encountered it for yourself and been placed inside the ground." So 'Umar began to cry and then said: "May Allāh have mercy on you my son. By Allāh,

(1) *Ibid* (2481/).
(2) *Ibid.*

you are a great blessing for the useful advice you impart to your father. I turn my face to Allāh, if only I had seen the anxiety caused to your brother, but knowing that the Angel of Death had entered the room frightened me from going in for fear that I might see it." He then ordered for his body to be prepared for burial.[1]

4. *His Resolve in the Religion and Strength in Executing the Truth:*

Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz summoned me, Makḥūl and Abī Qalābah to him and said: 'What do you think of this money that has been taken from the people unjustly?' That day, Makḥūl made a weak statement having disliked what 'Umar had said by saying: 'I think that you should review (the legal opinion)'. At that point, 'Umar looked at me as if to appeal for my help, so I said: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Send for 'Abd al-Mālik to attend as he capable of giving you an opinion'. Thus, when 'Abd al-Mālik entered upon him, 'Umar asked: "O 'Abd al-Mālik, what do you think of this money that has been taken from the people unjustly? They have approached me to demand it back and we know what the situation is with it." He answered: I am of the opinion that you should return it, as if you do not then you too have taken part in unjustly seizing it from them."[2]

(1) *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Ḥuffāẓ* [A Collection of the Memorisers' Letters] by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (2487/).

(2) *Ibid* (2488/).

5. *His Sickness and Death:*

As his son was suffering the pangs of death caused by plague, 'Umar asked him: "My son, how do you feel?" 'Abd al-Mālik answered: "I find myself confronted by the truth." So 'Umar said: "O son! If you are on my Scales (of deeds) then it is more beloved to me that I am on yours." His son therefore said: "And it is so, my father, that what you loved is more beloved to me that what I love for myself."[1]

After having buried his son, 'Umar delivered a speech at the site of his grave in which he said: "May Allāh bestow His Mercy on you my son. You were truly righteous to your father and Allāh has never granted me a gift that has made me happier since He gave me you. No, by Allāh, I have neither been more delighted nor do I want to delay what Allāh has in store for you. Therefore, may Allāh have mercy on you and forgive your sins. May He reward you for your deeds, protect you from harm and bestow goodness on every intercessor who intercedes on your behalf whether present or absent. We are satisfied with Allāh's Decree and we submit to His Will; all praise belongs to the Lord of the Worlds." And then he left.[2] He later wrote to his deputy in Kūfah to prohibit him from mourning his son in the way that was customary for princes and kings at that time. In his letter, he wrote: "Regarding 'Abd al-Mālik, the son of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. He was a servant among the servants of Allāh. He was good to Allāh in himself

(1) *Ibid* (2485/).
(2) *Ibid*.

and he was good to his father too. Allāh let him live for as long as I would have liked him to live and He then seized him at the time I would have liked Him to seize him. I have learned about death through him and we ask for the best for him from Allāh. I seek refuge in Allāh from loving something that goes against what He loves, as to go against that is not fitting for me even it means my misfortune in what he has blessed me with." He then said: "I wanted to write to you for that reason and to inform you of Allāh's Decree. I do not know whether you have already mourned him but I do not join in or agree with a single person doing that, neither do I authorize it from near or far. Allāh is sufficient for me and I hope He is for you too, if Allāh wills. May Allah peace be upon you."(1)

Another narration states that when 'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Umar died, 'Umar said: "My son, you were as Allāh says: "*Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world.*" (*al-Kahf*, 18:46) and I hope that today is from the lasting good and righteous deed that are better for rewards and better in respect of hope. By Allāh, it would gladden if you answered my supplication to you."(2)

'Abd al-Mālik bin 'Umar died at the age of nineteen.(3) 'Umar would frequently praise his son, by way of example, he said to him one day: "O 'Abd al-Mālik! Let me convey to

(1) *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Ḥuffāẓ* [A Collection of the Memorisers' Letters] by Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (2496/).
(2) *Ibid* (2496/).
(3) *Ibid* (2498/).

you some news. By Allāh, I have never seen an adolescent more pious, more learned in legal knowledge (jurisprudence), as well-versed and further from sensual desires, whether young or old, than you."[1] 'Umar also said: "By Allāh, if it I were not for my adoration of 'Abd al-Mālik in the way that a father adores his son, I would have considered him fit for the caliphate."[2] Another narration relates that when 'Abd al-Mālik passed away, his father began to praise him at his graveside which caused one of the men present to ask: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. If he had not died would you have made him your successor?" "No", answered 'Umar. "Why not, when you praise him like so?" he asked. 'Umar replied: "I would fear that my adoration for him was in the way that a father adores his son."[3] Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "I never saw three members of one household better than 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, his son, 'Abd al-Mālik, and their servant, Mazāḥim."[4] In light of the above examples, it is thereby fair to say these represent some of the fruits produced by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's approach to education and nurturing his children.

His Life with the People:

1. His Concern for Reforming Society:

'Umar paid a great deal of attention to reforming society

(1) *Ibid* (2499/).

(2) *Ibid*.

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Ibid*.

and eradicating the prevalent societal ills embedded within it. This is what he wrote about to one of his governors in a long and powerful letter , in which he expressed the importance of his concerns and requests, saying: "Evil does not prevail in a nation, followed by the righteous among them failing to forbid them from their evil, except that Allāh afflicts them with His Punishment or comes to the aid of who He wills among His servants. People have not ceased to be unaffected by the punishments and retribution is brought on them by the people of falsehood. Their sins are concealed for them, while one does not make their sins known without the others reprising on him for what he has done. Even if prohibitions emerged, the righteous among then would not condemn them for it, incurring punishments to fall from the sky upon the disobedient and those who condoned them such that perhaps they too are made to perish alongside them even though they disagreed with what the sinners used to do.

In the Book sent down by Allāh, the Sublime, I have never heard of anyone among the nations He caused to perish being saved except for those who used to forbid evil, for which reason Allāh elevated them above the sinners. Verily, Allāh did not afflict them with His Punishment and He helps whomever He wills among His servants from the fear, humiliation and revenge. It might be that He delivers retribution to one immoral person over another or an oppressor over another, whereby both of them will be made to end up in the Fire for their deeds. We therefore seek refuge in Allāh from making us wrongdoers or condoners of wrongdoers.

Verily, I have been informed that immorality has increased amongst you, insolence is abided in your towns and the forbidden injunctions that cause Allāh to dislike the one who commits them and become displeased with those who condone them are practiced openly. When a nation like this does not fear Him and openly turn to Allāh hoping for dignity, it is because most of them are insolent sinners. This was not the way of your predecessors and because of this Allāh's Grace was not deprived from them; rather they were as Allāh says: "*Severe against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.*" (*al-Fatḥ,* 48:19); "*Stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allāh, and never fear the blame of the Blamers.*" (*al-Ma'idah,* 5:54) Upon my life, it is certainly part of *Jihād* (striving, fighting in the way of Allāh) to be stern with the violators of Allāh's forbidden injunctions with hand, tongue and through fighting them over it even if they are your fathers, for the way to Allāh is through obedience to Him.

It has reached me that many people have become slack in enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil to protect themselves from being shunned and blamed such that it has become acceptable for a person to consider himself to be both good mannered and bad mannered, even as it is evident that Allāh has not made them the best mannered of people but disparately the worst mannered. A person should not accept being like this, whether it is himself or someone else, and moreover, he is expected to shun it, not merely save himself from the trouble that might befall him in the process. How can it be that person is content with his condition when

it goes against what Allāh has ordered him to do of enjoining good and forbidding evil?"[1]

Not only is this letter particularly emotive but 'Umar positively left his mark on history due to this very type of unwavering passion he showed towards upholding the *Sunnah* of Allāh, the Sublime. Notably, 'Umar's universal warning applies to any society in which corruption and disobedience are rife and that are then not condemned by the righteous people within it. When society reduces itself to this level, Allāh's Affliction must befall it in one of three ways: Allāh might afflict the people with some punishment from Himself; He might punish them at the hands of whomever He Wills among His servants, even an immoral, disobedient tyrant; or He might afflict them with fear, famine, humiliation, a type of disaster, etc. 'Umar professed that to remain silent in the face of blatant sinners is not the way of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) (may Allāh be pleased with them) whom Allāh has described as being stern and severe with disobedient sinners.

He further mentions that it falls under *Jihād* (striving, fighting in the way of Allāh) to be severe with the disbelievers and violators of Allāh's forbidden injunctions whether with hand or tongue, even if they are one's closest relatives. This is an extension of the meaning of *Jihad* that is corroborated by sound legal proof, like in the verse in which Allāh, the Majestic,

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 160.

says: "*O Prophet* (Muḥammad, *may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*))! *Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be severe against them; their abode will be Hell – and worse indeed is that destination.*" (*at-Taḥrīm*, 66:9) *Jihad* against the hypocrites therefore means to reject them and being stern in dealing with them.[1]

Sources confirm that 'Umar constantly concerned himself with reforming society to the extent that every one of his letters addressed it in some form or another, as Ibrāhīm bin Ja'far narrated from his father who said: "Ibn Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm never delivered Abī Bakr a letter from 'Umar that did not contain something to so with redressing grievances, reviving a *Sunnah*, eradicating a *Bid'ah*, distributing charity or handing out grants until he departed from this world."[2]

2. Reminding People of the Ākhirah (Hereafter):

One day, 'Umar addressed the people by saying: "I have not gathered you here to speak about your latest affairs but I considered the issue of your provisions and the place where you will all be going. I found a foolish person believing in it and a dying person denying it", and then he stepped down from the pulpit.[3] Despite its brevity, this speech was

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15, 16130/).

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5342/).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

nonetheless expressive in its reminder to the living about their journey after death, asserting that those who believe in the resurrection after death, the punishment and bliss of the grave, followed by judgment and then finally, everlasting bliss or misery, despite all this, do not adequately prepare for that day, and are foolish for not having the sense to prepare for the future according to what they actually believe in.

In another typical reminder to the people of death and the Hereafter, 'Umar delivered a speech on how people are created for eternity but must journey from one abode to another, declaring: "Verily, you were created for eternity but you move from one abode to another."(1) In a different speech, he said: "People! Do not be deceived by the *Dunyā* (world) or the period of time spent in it, as before long you are going elsewhere. Therefore, be servants of Allāh in yourselves and respond to what has passed before your inevitable deaths, as you do not have long left. In that case, fortify your hearts and be like a nation calling to their fate, for you will not be able to do this once your time is up and you will regret what you fall short of it in the Hereafter."(2) Death, the Hereafter and preparing for the meeting with Allāh were consistent themes of 'Umar's sermons and speeches (may Allāh have mercy on him).

3. Correcting Misconceptions:

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(1) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Complete Book on the Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (4482/).

(2) *Ibid* (4492/).

In one of his sermons, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "People! You do not have much time, neither is the Day of Judgment far away. As for the one afflicted with death, therefore, his resurrection has already been established whereupon no help can be sought and no good can be enhanced. Is it not the case that there is no sincerity towards a person who contradicts the *Sunnah* and no obedience to the one who disobeys Allāh? Are you not attacking those who flee from the oppression of their leaders for being disobedient? Is not the oppressive leader more disobedient than them? Do I not take care of matters in the way that Allāh has ordained? Indeed, the elderly have embellished them, the youth have exaggerated them, non-Arabs speak eloquently about them and desert nomads may migrate according to them until they consider there to be no other truth in religion." He then said: "May I enhance the wealth and honour of my beloved except in truth. There is no might or power except with Allāh."[1]

In this sermon of 'Umar's, he reminds the Muslims of the imminence of the Day of Resurrection and that one should be on his guard against death that will take him at any moment without warning. After that, he will neither be excused for the bad deeds that blacken his record nor will be able to enhance his good deeds in order to whiten his record. He will feel the worst regret at a time when regret will not be able to benefit what he has already done in his past life when he was able to make sincere, honest repentance and accumulate good

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 43.

deeds. 'Umar then conveyed that the only security comes with following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that there is no obedience to someone who disobeys Allāh. In that case, should some leaders let themselves be seduced to govern badly or accommodate to others whereby they order the people to disobey Allāh, or pave the way for that, there is no obedience to these leaders. Effectively, this brings an immediate end to those contradictions ordered by rulers for the *Ummah* to obey, since obedience is defined as and restricted to obedience to Allāh, the Sublime and not to people's whims and desires that only lead to the spread of corruption within society.

He later goes on to express his own role and responsibility – as the caliph – to his subjects that serves as proof of his impartiality towards affluence and tribalism, and more so, his sincerity towards Allāh, the Sublime. In doing so, he portrays the reality of social diversity that has confused custom for religion and *Bid'ah* (innovation) for *Sunan* (Prophetic Traditions). These confused innovations then become fostered and bred by the individuals in society until the non-Arabs who enter into Islām and the desert nomads who migrate for Islām are cultivated in that direction thinking that this is the true Religion. When social customs are mixed up, some of these ignorant customs are consequently mistaken for Islāmic customs that influence individuals in society, permeate their hearts and then inevitably lead, as ignorant customs do, them to surrender to their desires and whims. In the event that these customs are perversely deviant, it subsequently

makes it difficult for reformers and rectifiers to salvage the Islāmic social customs from the mixed up customs that have accumulated over time, especially as every perversity must have its advocates and supporters and not every person in society understands what is correct and what is not.

It follows that when reformers make attempts to purify social practices, they tend to make false claims in the name of reformation while only calling the people to follow other inherited ignorant traditions, as some people perceive long-standing traditions as holy and sacred. However, the process of reformation demands the highest level of responsibility, as in the case embarked on by ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz during his era. The reason for this, as we just mentioned, is because the effects and outcomes of reformation are drastic and immediately effective given that subjects are required by Allāh to obey the standing authority so long as it is in obedience to Allāh, the Sublme, in its rule.(1)

4. His Disavowal of Tribalism:

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote the following to aḍ-Ḍaḥāk bin ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān: “The thing that has provoked me to write this letter is something that was mentioned to be about the desert men who address the people and act harshly with their evident lack of knowledge of Allāh’s commands and their considerable delusion and confusion concerning them. Thus, they utterly forget His Afflictions and totally change His

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15, 15121/).

Blessings to the point there is no longer any benefit or good in proclaiming them. I have additionally been informed that those same men wage war for good and bad ends, claiming that they are leading those like them. Glory and praise be to Allāh! How far they are from showing gratitude for His Blessings and how close they are to every destruction, disgrace and debasement! May Allāh destroy them at every stopping station and from whatever safe haven they advance forth because, certainly, bad is built upon bad and fire is not left behind falsely. They have not heard the saying of Allāh in His Book: "*The believers are nothing else but brothers (in Islāmic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.*" (*al-Ḥujarāt*, 49:10) And His saying: "*This day, those who believed have given up all hope of your religion; so fear them not but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above mentioned meats), then surely, Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*" (*al-Mā'idah*, 5:3)

In spite of this, I have been informed that men are swearing allegiance to other than Islām. Indeed, there was no oaths taken in *Jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islāmic days) that Islām has not intensified such that if one party wishes to uphold his oath to an insolent sinner who disobeys Allāh and His Messenger, he has abandoned Islām for having forfeited it. I thereby warn everyone who hears or is informed of this letter of mine from

taking refuge in other than Islām, Allāh and His Messenger, or the believers. I give you warning upon warning, I remind those who do so time and time again, and I swear to them by the One Who shall seize every creature by the forelock and Who is Closer to every servant than his jugular vein, that the reason for my writing this advice to you is because should I learn of any single person stirring up emotion with the intention of it being adopted or refuted by the people, I am adamant – and Allāh is my Helper – that I shall humiliate them, whether he is one man, a family, a tribe or more than that. If you accept my advice, as it is guidance and there is nothing secret about it, then you will be of the righteous and believing people who are helped by their own tongues, which many people fail to realize. We ask Allāh to make our differences succeed us with the best succession in our religion and to direct us through those among us. Peace

In this letter, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, addresses the dangerous deviation that had emerged within Islāmic society at that time, specifically, by a group of Muslims in whose hearts true faith had not been established and whose ideas were not concerned with Islāmic knowledge. Rather, they had chosen to adopt pre-Islāmic, ignorant affiliations for themselves based on families and tribes whereby one would take an oath of loyalty to one's tribe whether in truth or falsehood, or whether in justice or injustice. That person would thereby concern himself with the affairs of his tribe,

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, pp. 1036-.

defending it, advocating for it, and so on, so much so that the tribe would become his brotherhood despite them being adversaries at war.

The problem of tribalism has dominated the communities of the world and has become aggravated to the point that even *Mujahidin* (warriors fighting in the way of Allāh) who enter into war affiliate themselves with tribalism, which has only proven to hinder the progress of *Jihad* and in turn pave the way for the annihilation of Muslims time after time. The situation in some countries has reached the point where every time a man assumes power in that country, he keeps his tribesmen close to him by vesting them with authority and strength and protecting them, resulting in the arousal of *Fitnah* (trials; discord) and the provocation of other tribes. Of course, the cause of all this is because it chose to discard its Islāmic bonds, which are a great blessing to Muslims, in place of ignorant ones.[1]

5. His Objection to Standing in His Presence:

When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz assumed the seat of power, the people rose before him and so he said: "O nation of Muslims! Sit when we sit and stand when we stand, for verily, the people stand for the Lord of the Worlds. Allāh imposed *farā'iḍ* (duties) and set *Sunan* (traditions; acts of worship) to see who affords them their rights and who abandons them."[2]

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(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15,16124/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 39.

'Umar wanted to abolish the customs and practices of that age which he believed the governors inherited from the leaders of other non-Muslim empires, which is why he was stringently determined to return the *Ummah* to the *Manhaj* (way; method) of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Here, 'Umar felt reluctant on the basis of two impelling obstacles to opposing his clansmen's image: firstly, it was their self-styled ambition to be seen to impose authority and fear in the hearts of the people; and secondly it was his family's pressing desire to keep up this appearance and their constant violation of their forbear's practices. Nevertheless, he overcame these obstacles on account of his strong determination and faith. The motives that drove him to his humility and disdain for worldly appearances was his fear in Allāh, the Sublime, and his aspiration towards the *Ākhirah* in terms of what Allāh might grant him therein. Motives like these are by far greater and more powerful than any other type of earthly desire, which 'Umar proved by successfully resorting in them against all obstacles, putting a stop to the people who put up illusive appearances and correcting society's notions of the desired relationship between leaders and their subjects. On this matter, 'Umar said: "Verily, Allāh imposed *Farā'iḍ* (duties) to clarify the reasons of true happiness and misery in the *Dunyā* (World) and *Ākhirah* (Hereafter). Whoever applies them joins the God-fearing in the *Dunyā,* is honoured by righteous companionship, is led on the Day of Resurrection to the Pleasure of Allāh, the Sublime, and to *Jannah* (Paradise),

and is honoured from outcome and result."[1]

6. His Acknowledgment of Virtuous People:

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions that the son of Qatādah bin an-Nu'mān was sent as part of a delegation to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who asked him on arrival: "Who are you?" Impulsively, he replied:

"I am the son of the man whose eye slipped down his cheek
That was put back in place by the hand of the Chosen One;
Thus, it was returned to the best condition,
How lovely an eye and how lovely the hand that returned it!"

Upon hearing his words, 'Umar recited:

"Such goodness cannot be found in drinking yoghurt,
Which is blended with water and then turned to urine."

'Umar then granted him the best reward he could (may Allāh have mercy on him).[2] From this we can see the position of the *Amīr,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, in honouring the son of Qatādah bin an-Nu'mān who introduced himself to 'Umar in terms of what happened to his father (may Allāh be pleased with him) involving the hand of Allāh's Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Not only does this attest to 'Umar's superiority in the area of manners and etiquette but it illustrates his mode of respect for people of virtue and

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(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15,16115/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 96; *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15,1622/).

advancement in the service of Islām and the Muslims. The ordeal Qatādah went through with his eye falling out testified to his exemption from fighting and his exposure to danger, in addition to his being honoured in being used as a means in the case of this Prophetic Miracle.(1) On the subject of honouring people of virtue, the case of Ziyād, the servant of Ibn 'Ayyāsh, deserves mentioning. The account goes that as Ziyād and some of his companions arrived at the location of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, they reached the entrance where they encountered a group of people who permitted Ziyād to enter and not the rest. Upon entering the room, however, Ziyād forgot to greet the caliph but upon remembering, he then said: "may peace of Allah be upon you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*." 'Umar replied: "The first one did not harm me." He then descended from the platform on which he was seated to the ground and said: "Indeed, it is distressing for me to be in a place raised above Ziyād", upon which Ziyād conveyed to him what he wanted and left. Accordingly, 'Umar instructed the treasurer of the *Bayt al- Māl* to open it up for Ziyād and those in his company who took whatever they needed from it. When the treasurer saw that the *Bayt al-Māl* was being opened for the likes of Ziyād and his friends, he was astonished that he would be given such authority, especially as he did not know who he was. Nevertheless, the treasurer obeyed his orders and allowed Ziyād to enter, upon which Ziyād took eighty or ninety *Dirham* for himself and his friends. Having witnessed that, the treasurer remarked: "The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* knows

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15,1623/).

exactly who to give authority over the *Bayt al-Māl* to."(1)

This provides a lucid depiction of 'Umar's humility and respect for the devout scholars, especially given the indifference he initially showed for the title of the caliphate even though he held the highest of titles with the Muslims. Such a position contains inherent *fitnah* (trial) because of the delusions of superiority and earthly status that come with it. As for the devout, their personalities do not change with status but instead they remain [redacted] and perhaps become even more so, when faced with respect and esteem by the people. Secondly, he descended from his seat in order to avoid literally being higher than that devout scholar, Ziyād bin Abī Ziyād, the servant of 'Abdullah bin 'Ayyāsh bin Abī Rabī'ah. In fact, Ziyād was a scholar from among those slaves whose importance Ibn 'Umar did not undervalue, since that which has to be considered is knowledge and *Taqwā* (God-consciousness), and not honouring someone because of lineage. It follows that this devout scholar did not take from the *Bayt al-Māl* except for that simple amount which was sufficient for him and which perfectly reflected his asceticism and humility. Superior minds and elevated souls do not aspire for lesser desires of worldly things, as their eyes are latched on to attaining the greatest everlasting bliss of the Hereafter.(2)

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 53; *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (1524/).

(2) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (1524/).

7. A Poor Egyptian Woman Complains to 'Umar:

'Umar would follow the affairs of the Muslims and leave the doors wide open to listen to their news. 'Umar never used to receive letters that had not been delivered to him by courier and among the letters delivered from Egypt was one sent to him by Fartūnah, a black slave-woman, in which she mentioned that she owned a short wall that had been knocked down and that her chickens had been stolen. Thus,'Umar wrote: "In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. From the slave of Allāh, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, to Fartūnah, the black slave-woman of so-and-so: I received your letter in which you mention the shortness of your wall and that it has been penetrated and your chickens have been stolen. I have therefore written to Ayūb bin Sharḥabīl [his then minister of prayer and war in Egypt] instructing him to build what will fortify you so that you no longer have to fear, Allāh willing." In his letter to Ayūb bin Sharḥabīl, he therefore wrote: "From the slave of Allāh, 'Umar, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* to Ibn Sharḥabīl: Fartūnah, the slave of so-and-so, wrote to me concerning the shortness of her wall, saying that her chickens had been stolen and that she would like for it to be fortified. Once this letter of mine reaches you, go to her personally and see that it is fortified for her." When the letter reached Ayūb, he rode to Jīzah in person and enquired about Fartūnah until he eventually found the poor black woman, upon which he informed her about the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*'s letter and fortified

her wall for her.[1]

8. His Concern for Ransoming Captives:

He wrote to the captives in Constantinople: "Indeed, you class yourselves as captives; refuge is with Allāh, for you are certainly prisoners in the way of Allāh. Know that I do not distribute anything among my subjects without first allocating the most generous and finest share to your families. I have sent you five *dinar* and if I did not fear that increasing that would cause the Byzantine oppressors to withhold it from you, I would have increased it. I have also sent so-and-so to ransom your children and elderly, males and females, freemen and slaves. Now spread the good news and peace be upon you."[2]

This letter sheds light on 'Umar's supreme morals and the magnitude of his feelings towards his responsibility to be a model Muslim leader who feared Allāh in the way he governed and was conscious of Him in granting his subjects' rights with utmost sincerity and honesty. In practice of this, he tended to the Muslim captives held by the Byzantines who he viewed as *Murābiṭīn* (i.e. the people of *Ribāṭ*, meaning "fortified outpost"; holding fast to outposts of the Islāmic lands in order to protect the Muslims therein) imprisoned in the way of Allāh,

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1634-; *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (1577/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1634-;

the Sublime, on which account they attained the reward and compensation of the *Murābiṭin.* From the perspective of moral support and compassion, 'Umar consoled them through financial support them and dispelled their worries by notifying them that their families were being adequately provided for in their absence. Besides that, he assured them of the benefits of being separated from their families. Such gentle and beneficent behaviour was deserving of those captives who set out to protect Islām and achieve its victory.(1)

9. Wiping the Debts of the Insolvent:

He wrote to his official regarding wiping the debts of the insolvent and he replied: "What if we find a man possessing a house, workers, horses, furniture in his house, etc?" 'Umar answered: "It is necessary for Muslim men to have a dwelling in which they can rest their heads, workers to suffices their businesses, horses to fight against his enemies on, and furniture in his house, yet in spite of this they may still be in debt. Therefore wipe any debts they have incurred."(2) In this letter, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* orders the elimination of all debts even if the debtors own houses, worker, furniture, horses, and so on, which simply conveys the great extent of his mercy and compassion, in addition to the concern he felt towards his subjects' affairs. This is how just leaders should behave with their nation's wealth, whereby they enrich its poor, mend

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (1577/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1634-;

its decrepit, liberate its captives, wipe away its hardships and relieve its needs.[1]

10. News of the Blind Captive being Held by the Byzantines:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sent an emissary to the head of Byzantium and after visiting him he then left and walked around. Upon passing by a particular place, he heard a man reciting the Qur'ān as he was milling so the emissary went in to greet him but he did not reply to his greeting, which he gave some three of four times. Eventually, he greeted him a final time and then said: "How weak is the greeting of *Salām* (Peace) in this land!" He then informed him that he was 'Umar's emissary to the head of Byzantium, saying to the man: "What is the matter with you?" He replied: "I was taken captive in such and such a place and subsequently taken to the head of Byzantium who handed me over to the Christians but I refused and so he said to me: "If you do not do so then I shall gouge out your eyes. However, I chose my religion over my eyesight and consequently he gouged out my eyes and put me in this position whereby he sends wheat for me to mill daily and a loaf of bread for me to eat."

It follows that the messenger returned to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and told him about the man, regarding which he said: "I had not finished telling 'Umar about the man but that the tears from his eyes had wet his front." He next instructed that

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (1577/).

the following message be conveyed to the king of Byzantium: "I have been informed about so-and-so (and he described him) and I swear by Allāh, if you do not send him to me, I will dispatch army upon army against you until the first detachment is at your end and the last is at mine." With the messengers return to Byzantium, the king remarked: "How quickly you have returned!" And so he handed him 'Umar's message and after he had read it, he said: "We could not bear to see a righteous man like him so we sent him to where he is. I then waited to see when he would come out and one day I went to him to find him lying down, upon which he got up from his bed and a look of sadness was visible on his face." He then asked me: "Do you know why I did what I did?" I answered: "No", so he said: "Indeed, he came to me from some of my limbs and a righteous man had died. That is why I did what I did." He then said: "Do you know that is a righteous man is among a bad people, he does not leave but a little among them until he leaves from their midst." So I asked: "Then will you permit me to leave?" At that point, the emissary despaired that he would send the man back with him, after which he said: "We..." And he sent the man back with him.(1)

11. The Iraqi Woman's Daughters were Allocated Money from the Bayt al-Māl:

A woman travelled from Irāq to see 'Umar bin 'Abd al-

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 168.

'Azīz and upon reaching his doormen, she asked: "Does the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* have a partition?" They replied: "No. So you may request one if you want to." She then entered upon Fāṭimah who was sitting in her house repairing cotton. The woman greeted her and she appropriately returned the greeting, the said: "You may enter." When the woman sat down, she glanced up to see nothing but an old house, which caused her to say: "I have come seeking charity to this worn-out, tattered house?" Fāṭimah therefore said to her: "The tatter of this house builds houses like yours." 'Umar then asked permission to enter the house and then headed towards the well in the corner, upon which he yanked out a pail of water and poured it onto some clay to patch up holes in the building's walls, during which time he kept on looking over at Fāṭimah. Assuming that he was a servant, the women confusedly asked Fāṭimah: "Do you not feel ashamed? Why do you not veil in the presence of this man?" Fāṭimah replied: "He is not a servant. He is the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*."

'Umar next approached them, greeted them and went into his house wherein he went straight to the prayer area and began to pray. He next enquired to Fāṭimah about the woman, so she said: "This is she." At that point, he picked up a bunch of grapes and chose the finest ones for her to eat, after which he approached her and said: "What do you need?" She answered: "I am a woman from Irāq with five daughters who are weak and feeble and so I came to you to seek your good opinion on what I should do with them." 'Umar began to say: "Weak and feeble…" but then started to cry. He

next took up his ink, pen and paper and began to write to the Governor of Irāq. He then said to the woman: "Give me the eldest one's name" and he allocated to her an entitlement, upon which the woman said: "Praise be to Allāh!" He next asked for the names of the second, third and fourth daughter, and as the woman praised Allāh, 'Umar accordingly allocated entitlements to each of them. Once he had finished allocating to the fourth daughter, the woman was so overwhelmed with joy that she began to supplicate for 'Umar and beseeched reward for him on his behalf. At that point, 'Umar raised his hand and said: "We were allocating entitlements to them as you were offering praise", and so he added a fifth entitlement to the list.

Upon her return to 'Irāq, the woman submitted 'Umar's letter to the standing Governor and as he read it, he began to cry unrestrainedly and said: "May Allāh have mercy on the person behind this letter." The woman therefore exclaimed: "Did he die?!" He answered her: "Yes", upon which she screamed and wailed. The Governor consoled her, saying: "May no harm befall you. I would not deny anything he wrote in his letters." As a result, he met her needs and granted the entitlements to her and her daughters.(1)

12. His Revival of the Sunnah of Welfare:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Verily, it is not lawful for you

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 169.

to take on behalf of your deceased; hence, declare them to us and notify us of every newly-born child so that we may allocate an entitlement to it."[1] He instructed Ibn Ḥazm to make weekly inspections of jails. The jail wardens were warned not to ill-treat the prisoners. Ibn Sa'ad relates a narration from Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, who said: "We were in charge of the office set up for prisoners and specifically the task of issuing out grants to them in accordance with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's diktat, in which he stipulated: 'Whoever has not long been absent, allocate his grant to his family. Whoever has been absent interruptedly, issue his grant to him when he comes for it or to whoever can present proof of his identity (as alive) and that they are his legal representative."[2] Thus, every prisoner was given a monthly stipend and proper seasonal clothing. 'Umar further advised the jail authorities to inculcate love for virtue and hatred for vice among the prisoners. Education of the prisoners led to their reform.

On these grounds, 'Umar revived the *Sunnah* of Islāmic welfare that had been present during the caliphates of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and Mu'āwiyah (may Allāh be pleased with them). Subsequent to them, welfare became extinct such that grants were limited to only the notables of the *Ummah* that thereby saw pronounced exploitation at the hands of the Umayyads. On the other hand, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz distributed welfare to all individuals within the *Ummah* without discrimination, which certainly marked one of the illustrious

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5346/).
(2) *Ibid* (5348/).

reforms and renewals of his time.[1]

13. Enhancing the Wealth of the Needy:

Some people from al-Madīnah approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who subsequently began to enquire from them about the people of al-Madīnah, saying: "What did the poor people who used to sit in such and such a place do?" They answered: "They moved from there, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*." He went on: "And what about the poor people who used to sit in such-and-such a place?" They replied: "They moved from there and Allāh enhanced their wealth." He said: "And there were those poor people who would sell *Kubṭ* (a type of leaf eaten by camels) to travellers?" They said: "Allāh enhanced our wealth and we no longer had to sell that because of what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz gave us."[2] These were the fruits of 'Umar's style of leadership generated through his generous distribution of wealth among the *Ummah* that had been stifled by dissipation to the level that one person wasted what tens of Muslims could have benefited from. During 'Umar's time, public spending reached all groups in society in a manner that it had never reached before because of the trifling amounts of money some officials issued for public spending.[3]

14. Paying Bridal Dowries from the Bayt al-Māl:

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15, 16138/).

(2) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (1/151).

(3) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15138/).

'Umar embarked on disbursing funds to people in innovative ways, leading to eliminating crises and problems. He ordered the viceroy of Irāq, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, to help Muslim young men and women in straitened circumstances to marry, writing to him: "Search for every single (man or woman) who does not have money and pay for their marriage costs." As a result, money was granted from the *Bayt al-Māl* to whoever was unable to afford to get married. Abū al-A'lā said: "A letter from 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) was read out in the *Masjid* (mosque) of Kūfah while I was present. It read: 'Whoever has a debt that he is incapable of paying, give him money from the *Bayt al-Māl* and whoever wants to marry a woman but cannot afford to pay her dowry then pay it from the *Bayt al-Māl*'."[1] This constituted an important decision in the interests of societal reform, particularly because marriage plays a role in hindering or boosting happiness, reproduction, growth, etc, and for many poor people, bridal dowries are an impediment to marriage, especially when high dowries are being demanded. If the state is able to provide for those who cannot afford to pay a dowries themselves, this is a way of contributing to the formation of a righteous society and safeguarding it from corruption and promiscuity.[2]

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(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5374/).

(2) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15139/).

15. His Attempts to Narrow the Gaps between the Social Classes:

Yūnus bin Shubayb said: "I witnessed 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz on one of the festivals. The noblemen had surrounded the *minbar* (pulpit) in such a way that there remained a gap between them and the rest of the people. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz arrived, he ascended the *minbar* and greeted the people, but as he noticed the gap, he beckoned the people to move forward, which they did until they were all mixed together."(1) Following the caliphate of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* Mu'āwiyah (may Allāh be pleased with him), it had become habit among some of the governors to raise classes of people and distinguish them from the others by affording them grants, councils, and so forth. In fact, classism had become so widespread within society that some individuals had been inflicted with a sense of inferiority about themselves to the extent that they no longer felt worthy to sit with the upper classes that had been given the title of "elite." People had generally come to feel so insecure about themselves that they lacked the courage to even sit next to the so-called special classes within the mosques in which worshippers are supposed to compete with each other over how close they can sit to the *Imām* as a means of gaining extra reward.

After 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz took to the caliphate, one of his foremost concerns was to narrow the disparities between the different groups in society in order to remove

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5387/).

the arrogance and pride attached to the upper classes and to morally boost and strengthen the weaker classes and remove their feelings of inferiority. Among his efforts aimed at achieving this equality between them was by means of welfare, since money is unquestionably a major factor in raising the status of lowly people. Such was the attitude and interest 'Umar afforded to this affair of bringing the social classes closer together until the gap between the Muslims that had been left by the injustice of former leaders and their unjust regimes no longer existed.[1]

16. The Great Sense of Responsibility He Felt Towards All Members of Society:

Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik, 'Umar's wife, said: "'Umar (may Allāh have mercy on him) would make himself available to the Muslims and his mind would be preoccupied with their affairs. If by evening he had not finished all that he had to do that day, he would carry on until later in the night, otherwise he would retire in the evening. In that case, he would ask for his lamp to be lit that he paid for with his own money, offer two units of prayer, then kneel with his head in his hands and tears flowing down his cheeks, sniffling and sobbing until his heart almost broke, which he would do until daybreak, and then he would get up the next day and fast. I drew close to him and said: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Have you not done what you need to do?

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15108/).

He replied: "Rather, you tend your business and leave me to tend to mine." She said: "I want to learn." He said: "In that case, I shall tell you. I find that I have been put in charge of the affairs of this *Ummah,* its black and its red. I then remember the poor and starving, the lost and bewildered, the subdued captives, those who have little money and many children, and I see the same happening in the furthest outskirts of the land. I know that Allāh will question me about them and that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will confront me concerning them. Hence, I fear that Allāh will not accept any excuses from me in relation to them and no argument will support me with the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). So I seek mercy, O Fāṭimah, for myself, that causes my eyes to shed tears and pains my heart, and the more that I remember, the more I fear. Therefore, take lesson from that if you will or let your eyes shed tears."[1]

'Umar's confession of his sense of responsibility towards the *Ummah* conveys the very scale and depth of it, despite the effort he exerted to identify the conditions and affairs of people. However, there was no limit on the apprehension he felt for perhaps not meeting the needs of the Muslims, as they shall be mentioned in his account and be used to determine whether he shall go to *Jannah* (Paradise) or the *Nār* (Hellfire). Not only does this testify to the depth of his faith in the *Ghayb* (Unseen) until it was as if he was looking at with his own

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 170; *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15107/).

eyes, but it was what drove him to be just and merciful and inspect the condition of the *Ummah.* The fact that he would cry so much certainly proves the intensity of his fear in Allāh, the Majestic, and how Allāh gave him such impeccable fear, elevated his thinking and behaviour above temptations, and granted him strength in the face of challenges and threats. In everything he did, he remembered the Fire and Judgment and considered everything contemptible towards that end.(1)

17. Spending on the Dhimmī (Non-Muslim Living under Muslim Rule) Who Reached Old Age and Possessed No Money:

Islām is the religion of justice, munificence and caring for the weak. Islām gives attention to everyone who lives on the earth, even if they do not follow the religion of Islām. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz embodied this sublime value by applying the laws of the religion as they should be applied. Thus, he determined that if a *Dhimmī* reached old age and had neither money nor kin to look after him, he should then be provided for from the Muslim's *Bayt al-Māl.*(2) Ibn Sa'ad narrated: "'Umar bin Bahrām as-Ṣarrāf said: 'A letter from 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was read out to us, in which he said: 'In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. From the servant of Allāh, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* to 'Udayy

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15108/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2353/).

bin Arṭa'ah and the Muslim Believers, peace be upon you. To you, I praise Allāh Whom there is no one worthy of worship but Him and say: turn to the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule) and treat them kindly. Should any of them grow old and not have any money, spend on them, and should they have kin then order them to spend on them."[1]

18. Eating With People of the Book:

It was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's practice to spend a *Dirham* of his own money every day on feeding the Muslims and then eating with them. He would also visit the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* who would present him with fenugreek, vegetables and other such foods that they were accustomed to eating. In return, he would give them more than that in addition to eating with them and if they refused to accept what he offered them then he would not eat with them.[2]

19. 'Umar and Poets:

When 'Umar was nominated as the successor to the caliphate, a band of poets assembled outside his door where they stayed for a number of days but when they were not permitted entry, they decided to leave. However, when Jarīr saw Rajā' bin Ḥaywah, who was one of the famous orators of

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad (5380/).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5316-315/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2356/).

Shām (the Levant), enter upon 'Umar, he began to recite (in poetic verse):

"O man with the loose turban!

This is your time, so seek permission on our behalf from 'Umar."

Rajā', however, entered without mentioning anything about the poets whatsoever. Next, 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah passed the poets, upon which Jarīr said to him:

"O man proudly mounted on his horse!

This is your time, since my time has been left out;

Notify our Caliph when you meet him,

That I am shackled to this door as if I have been here for a century;

Do not forget our urgent need, may Allāh forgive you!

My absence from my family and country has been too long."

'Udayy subsequently entered upon 'Umar and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* The poets are at your door and their arrows are poisonous and their statements are exhaustive." 'Umar said: "Woe unto you, O 'Udayy! What do I have to do with poets?" 'Udayy replied: "May Allāh exalt the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn.* Verily in the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is an example." 'Umar asked: "How?" He said: "Al-'Abbās bin Marādis as-Silmī praised him

and so he gave him what he wanted to silence him." 'Umar enquired: "Do you remember anything of what he (al-'Abbās bin Marādis) said?" "Yes", 'Udayy replied and he recited the following verses:

"I saw you, O the best of all human race,

Convey a message that came to teach the Truth;

You proclaimed for us the Religion of Guidance after having wandered

In error's way from the Truth, what while in darkness it lay;

You lit up a gloomy affair with proofs,

And extinguished a flaming fire with the Qur'ān."

'Umar interrupted: "Woe unto you, O 'Udayy! Who is at the door?" He therefore listed the names of the poets, specifically, 'Umar bin 'Abdullah bin Rabī'ah, al-Farzadaq, al-Akhṭal and Jarīr, upon which 'Umar denied all except Jarīr admission. So 'Udayy went forth and admitted Jarīr, who entered, saying:

"Verily, He Who sent the Prophet Muḥammad to humankind,

Has entrusted the Caliphate to the just ruler;

His justice and munificence all creatures do embrace,

He sheds light and so the erring is corrected;

Verily, I seek immediate good from you,

For the souls of men are partial to an instant love."

Having listened to Jarīr, 'Umar then said: "Woe unto you, O Jarīr! Keep the fear of Allāh before your eyes and say nothing but the truth."(1) Jarīr next recited the following verses:

"How many disheveled widows in al-Yamāmah

And how many weak orphans without a voice do remain

For whom is your departure even as a father's loss?

Like young chicks nestling in the nest that have neither risen nor flown

They call to you in grieved vain as if

They were mad *Jinn* or insane humans;

Caliph of Allāh! What do you command for us?

We do not come to you or wait in the heat

For your distance to still worry me;

My highs and lows have been prolonged,

Now that the clouds have broken their promise to our hope,

We trust the Caliph's bounty will, to us, stand for rain."

After that, 'Umar said: "O Jarīr! I do not see what you have told me to be true." He retorted: "Nevertheless, *O Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* I am a wayfarer and abroad!" As a result, 'Umar gave him a hundred *dirham* and then he left. The poets subsequently asked him: "What happened?" He replied:

(1) *Al-Muntaẓam* [The Chronological] (7/37).

"That which will sadden you. I left from the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* who is a man who gives to the poor and denies the poets, and I am well-pleased with him." At that point, he recited:

"I found that the charms of the devil did not tempt him;

And my own devil was himself protected in charms from *jinn*."[(1)]

In reality, this constituted a new manner of dealing with poets under the Umayyad State, as poets would previously praise the kings and leaders from who they would request gifts and presents. It is no surprise then that their poetic verses were filled with lies and hyperbole up until the time of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's accession of the caliphate, upon which they attempted to laud him albeit his attitude towards poets was as we have just shown. On the contrary, 'Umar put an end to this practice that only corrupted the structure of society and encouraged the prevalence of bad morals like lying, deceiving and hypocrisy. Once this had been eradicated by 'Umar, it did not re-emerge again until after his death.[(2)] Jarīr's last statement confirms his knowledge of the fact the *Shayāṭīn* (devils) were behind the poets in inciting the applause of leaders and that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was distinguished in his decency and purity from those *Shayāṭīn*.[(3)]

(1) *Al-Muntaẓam* [The Chronological] (7/99).

(2) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15174/).

(3) *Ibid.*

20. Being Influenced by Ascetic Poetry and His Relationship with Sābiq al-Barbarī:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz kept those poets who stuck to ascetic poetry and the remembrance of death and the Hereafter close by. It appears that one of the closest poets to the heart of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was in fact Sābiq al-Barbarī.[1] He would preach to 'Umar and recite poetry to him, which would have an impact on 'Umar and make him cry. One day, Sābiq al-Barbarī entered as he was reciting poetry and he finished his recitation with the following verses:

"There are many times when a healthy man sleeps safe from death,

But suddenly death comes to him after he has gone to sleep;

Then if death comes to man when he is asleep,

He could no way escape from it and neither could he stop it;

In the morning he will be shrouded and women will mourn him,

He cannot hear the one who prays over him even if he raises his voice;

He is brought close to the grave, which is now his resting place,

And he has left behind all those who were with him yesterday;

(1) *'Umarbin 'Abd al-'Azīz al-A'lām* [The Great Figure: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (369/).

For death will not spare a rich man because of his money,

And neither will a poor man nor a needy man be saved."

The narrator, Maymūn bin Mahrān, said: "'Umar did not cease to cry and contemplate upon it until he fainted, at which point we stood up and left."(1)

A long *Qasīdah* (a form of lyric poetry) compiled by Sābiq al-Barbarī containing exhortation and wisdom profoundly influenced 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. It read:

"In the name of the One Who revealed the *Suwar* (Qur'anic Verses)

If you knew what is coming and what shall ensue,

You would be on your guard, for it might be useful to you;

Be patient with decreed fate and accept it

Even if it brings you some misfortune,

As no living man ever lived a serene and blissful life

Without that serenity and bliss being followed by a day of trouble;

Enquire from the people concerning what you do not know,

For if you become blind, your blindness will be cleared by knowledge;

A man will realize one day after his lapse and error,

How the ignorant are controlled despite days of warnings and examples;

(1) *Al-Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar* [The Complete Biography of 'Umar] (2612/); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 184.

Piety is the best provision that you can carry along,
And reverence is the best thing that man can finally obtain;
The one who demands oppression will not get what he seeks,
But the pursuer of the Truth may get success offered to him;
In guidance there are lessons, through which hearts are healed,
Just like rain whose drops make trees blossom and flourish;
Piety for the learned man is not the same for the ignorant,
And the man who sees is not like the one who is blind with no vision;
Wisdom is a selective gift that is given to man,
And error is something that is hated by comers and goers;
A man might be ruined by something he despises,
And that thing will develop itself while he is despised;
The self is never satisfied with what it gets,
It continues to have a strong desire for other things;
And even if the self has enough, it will continue to have
A strong desire for things it has not even seen;
For everything there is a case which changes it,
As changing events affect the colour of locks;
Mentioning Allāh will revive the life of hearts,
As the rain revives the land when it dies;
Learning clears away blindness from the heart of man,

As the moon clears away the blackness of the dark;
Recitation will never benefit a hard heart,
For has a stone ever become soft at the words of a preacher?
Death is a bridge for the one who walks on his feet,
Towards things that are feared and awaited;
The go through in groups and are gathered,
In an abode in which all desert and city dwellers shall come;
Anyone who was in a fort then was saved in its fortification,
Or the one who was in the habit of drinking, his wine did not save him;
Indeed, when was I a lover of this world
When to its pleasures a show contemptuous demeanor
I do not see any effect of remembrance over me,
Even as water has some effect on a hard stone;
If my remembering the Hereafter was the cause of having sleepless eyes,
In the same way the worldly matters make me tired of long awakening,
Then I would have healed a heart that was injured by long sickness,
And the broken bones would have been brought back to normal;
The strength of youth rises so high in man,
But one day, every such rise shall fall,

And every home will end up in ruins after once being new;
And behind youth there is death and decay,
While a tree branch looks green and fresh and its stump is lush,
It gets broken into fragments and it turns into decay;
How often a unified people were scattered by time,
And every united gathering will one day be dispersed;
Many a time a sublime man heralded by his crown,
Will suddenly have his fire of war in blazing flames;
He remains sitting on his silk brocade and concealed in it,
When upon it are built the domes and halls of the kingdom;
He had death coming to him while he was very sick,
And twisted with two dusty cheeks and covered with dusty;
Do you wish to remain in this life after Ādam?
And can the branches remain once the trunk is hollow?
They have houses on the path of floods,
And can a home resist water with its foundations made from clay?
To death is their way even if their safety lasts long,
For this is the fate if every son of a woman even if they are many;
Once you receive things, they become similar,
And in dealing with them there will be differences and lessons;
A man does not live long with hopes in this life,

For when an ordeal is over in it, another one will appear on the way;

This life has its own sweet taste of living which is ephemeral,

And in its ends there is the bitter and the patient;

When some have their end come close,

Others come in their places after them;

You shall not be held back by what you have been advised,

When animals are driven away by shepherds they become restrained;

You become like slaughter-camels waiting to be killed,

Do not be vain and instead try to abandon this world,

For it has bad effects and vanity is disbelief in grace;

Take your forebears as examples to follow and emulate,

And there is no nation which does not have Forebears;

Until you become followers of the ways of your Forebears,

And become patient in the tests of the world as they were;

I only see people in this world going away,

And every bond of attachment shall be broken;

They do not feel they lost something in their religion,

They are ignorant, for if they lost their life they would feel it."[1]

It has also been narrated that 'Umar was standing in a funeral procession one day when he saw a group of people being hit by the dust in the open and so they moved into the shade. He therefore stated to cry and recite:

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12707/).

"The one who was used to having his forehead exposed to the sun,

And to the dust, he fears disfigurement and dishevelment;

He gets accustomed to the shade so that his looks seem pleasant,

But one day, he shall inhabit an abode, humiliated and against his will;

He shall dwell in a dark, dusty and deserted pit,

In this pit, under the earth, he will stay for a long time."(1)

The Qualities of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Social Reform:

Throughout the course of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's life, it is possible to identify the following qualities of his approach to social reform. The most prominent of these are:

- ***Exemplar:***

  He was an excellent example of asceticism, humility, holding himself, his family and tribe to account, and implementing Islāmic Law upon himself and those around him.

- ***Measured and Gradual Change:***

  He achieved social reform, eradicated *Bid'ah*

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12706/).

(innovation in religion) and revived the *Sunan* (prophetic traditions) by making gradual changes, as opposed to rapid or fundamental change.

- ***Understanding Human Beings:***

  Based on this, he dealt with people in a wise and good manner when making something desirable or undesirable, for example, he would give some worldly thing to people in order to pacify them or rightfully take from them in the way of justice and removing injustice.

- ***Prioritisation:***

  He gave priority to Redressing Grievances over other things and in this respect pursued a well-defined policy, starting with himself and then his family and tribe. He dismissed unjust governors and appointed competent, trustworthy and knowledgeable people with righteous characters in their place by way of establishing justice and implementing Islāmic Law.

- ***A Clear Vision of His Reformative Measures:***

  This was evident when he renewed the concept of *Shūrā* (Consultation) pertaining to pledging loyalty to the leader and the *Ummah*'s right to choose him,

appointing reliable governors over the provinces, spreading justice throughout the state, reviving the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, his observance and enforcement of sound beliefs and combating false beliefs, the importance he attached to the scholars, his commitment to serving Islām through the institutionalisation of *Da'wah,* knowledge, teaching, spiritual purification, and so which, which he extended to all his officials in the economic, political and social domains. Thus, he possessed a comprehensive vision of reform and renewal, as this book shall validate.

- ***His Compliance with the*** Qur'ān ***and the Prophetic*** Sunnah:

He followed the Qur'ān, Prophetic *Sunnah* and the guidance of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in his vision of reform and renewal. It is therefore plausible to say that the clarity of such a comprehensive vision of reform emerged owing to the sound fundamentals present in the legitimate Islāmic sources that were diligently observed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Scholars:

The days of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's reign witnessed

the beginning of the scholars' participation in important state matters and their close affiliation with and influence on the policy-making process. By the time of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's accession to the caliphate, the role played by the scholars in state matters had become significantly effective and comprehensively diversified, and with 'Umar as the head of state, he now represented one of the greatest scholars and senior jurists, as if he were a scholar and not the sovereign. In fact, the body of scholars was extended under his rule, as was the extent of their participation, to involve the centralisation of decision-making in the state's capital whereby 'Umar exclusively surrounded himself with a body of scholars to advise him and help him until they became the only cavaliers in the arena. Hence, they contributed to the formulation of legitimate Islāmic State-policy and their responsibilities further extended to the rest of the State's faculties whereby they occupied various positions and offices. We would be stating nothing but the truth if we said that at the time of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the state was a state of scholars and it further represented a model of how the Islāmic State should be run and formed, that is, by uniting legislative power with administrative power in the best way possible.

'Umar was a scholar of the first rank and surrounded himself with scholars. The contribution made by the scholars during 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's reign reached an unprecedented level in the history of the Umayyad caliphate. This happened for a number of reasons, the foremost of them being 'Umar's eagerness to keep the scholars close to him and make them

his inner circle, ministers and agents. The other reason is related to the fact that none of those scholars considered it excusable to separate from 'Umar and not participate in his affairs from the point of view that if any of them did become detached from him, they were not fulfilling their role of preserving knowledge and 'Umar's religion, as his mixing with other than the scholars was seen as having an adverse effect on his religion. This mutual understanding meant that not only was it 'Umar who appointed and wanted the scholars in his company but also the scholars considered it their religious duty to devotedly bear the responsibility that had been thrust upon their shoulders, where no excuse to evade that responsibility was considered justified or acceptable.(1) Ibn 'Asākir relates them as having said: "It is not possible for us to separate from this man in case his actions contradict his words."(2) This unparalleled participation of the scholars came to view during 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's reign in a number of manifestations, of which the main ones were:

1. Their Close Contact with the Caliph and His Strong Determination to Pursue His Programme of Reform:

The manner in which the scholars aided 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to enforce his programme of reform was

(1) *Ibid*, p. 196.

(2) *Mukhtaṣir Tārīkh Ibn 'Asākir* [A Summary of Ibn 'Asākir's History] extracted from *Athar al-'Ulamā' fī al-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars on Poilitcal Life], p. 197.

primarily related to his passing of reformative resolutions and decisions, which the scholars served to impact some influence on. One of those active scholars to have played a prominent role was 'Arāk bin Mālik, whom his paternal cousin mentions as one of 'Umar's strongest accomplices against the *Banī* Marwān in the task of exacting the *Fay'* (conquered land and property) and illegal assets that they had acquired. Because of this, he encountered fierce opposition by the angry *Banī* Umayyah and in later years, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik had him banished to Dahlak (a small island in the Yemeni Sea) after he assumed power.(1)

As for the person of 'Arāk bin 'Abd al-Mālik al-Ghafārī, he was a senior *Shaykh* (learned religious leader), *Muḥaddith* (transmitter of *Ḥadīth*) and one of the finest *Tābi'īn* (second and third generation followers). He was an ascetic and devout worshipper and the people of the island where he was banished to consequently gained a great deal from him.(2) This honourable *Tābi'ī* was particularly proficient in his knowledge of fasting and it was about him that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "I do not know anyone who prays more than 'Arāk bin Mālik." He died while in exile (may Allāh have mercy in him) during the reign of Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik in the year 104 AH.(3)

Maymūn bin Mahrān was also one of 'Umar's closest

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (564/).

(2) *Intishār al-Islām fīl-Qarn al-Ifrīqī khilāl al-Qurūn ath-Thālithah al-Uwlā lil-Hijrah* [The Spread of Islām in the African Continent throughout the First Three Centuries of the *Hijrah* Calender], pp. 389-.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (564/).

associates. His son, 'Umar bin Maymūn, narrated that his father said: "I did not cease to moderate in the affairs of *Ummah* while I was with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to the point that I once said to him: 'What is with this scroll that you are writing on that comes from the *Bayt al-Māl?'* He therefore wrote right up to the margins and then left it so that his letter was not longer than a hand span."(1) According to adh-Dhahabi, Maymūn bin Mahrān was the Imām, scholar and *Mufti* (Issuer of legal opinions) of Upper Mesopotamia.(2) About him, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Wherever this man went, he would herd the people and the ignorant among them like cattle!"(3)

He was 'Umar's elder by twenty years(4) and he was one of the scholars of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) to whom many sayings about adhering to the Book of Allāh and the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are ascribed. One of his sayings was: "Do not sit in the company of the people of *Qadar* (*Qadariyyah*), do not insult the *Saḥābah* (Companions) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and do not study the stars."(5) One day, he wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "Indeed, I am a fragile, old man and you have assigned me judge among the people", at which time he was in charge of *Kharāj* taxes and the judiciary in Upper Mesopotamia. 'Umar

(1) *Ibid* (5133/).
(2) *Ibid* (571/).
(3) *Ibid* (572/).
(4) *Ibid* (573/).
(5) *Ibid*.

wrote back: "Verily, I did not assign you to do what you do not find pleasant in terms of the *Kharāj* taxes and as for judging, judge whatever is evident to you. Should you find something ambiguous, refer the case to me. Indeed, if a matter appears too difficult for people, they abandon it."[1] Maymūn bin Mahrān also said: "A man is not pious until he holds himself to more account that his comrade (or partner) and until he knows where his clothes, food and drink are from."[2] And he said: "Three things bring about piety and insolence: trusts, covenants and the bonds of kinship."[3] A man said to Maymūn bin Mahrān: "O Abū Ayūb! The people will be fine as long as Allāh keeps you with them." He said in return: "Pay attention to your affair. Indeed, the people will be fine as long as they fear their Lord."[4] And he said: "Whoever does some bad in secret, let him repent in secret and whoever does some bad openly, the people humiliate and do not forgive, while Allāh forgives and does not humiliate."[5]

Ja'far bin Burqān said: "Maymūn bin Mahrān said to me: 'Ja'far! Tell me something I hate to my face, for a man does not give real advice to his brother until he says what he hates to his face'."[6] Abī al-Malīḥ said that Maymūn said: "If a man goes to the door of the ruling authority but is dismissed then let him go to the houses of the Merciful, pray two units and

(1) *Ibid* (574/).

(2) *Ibid*.

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Ibid* (575/).

(5) *Ibid*.

(6) *Ibid*.

ask for what he needs there."[1] Maymūn bin Mahrān (may Allāh have mercy on him) died in the year 117 AH, while some sources say 116 AH.[2]

2. Their Obligation to 'Umar to Advise and Remind Him of His Responsibility:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is esteemed as the foremost caliph of the Umayyad dynasty to have received advice and direction and witnessed the largest number of letters of correspondence between the caliph and the scholars. To review those scholars who imparted advice and reminded 'Umar and what they wrote in their letters to him would require too much time and space and so only some names can be listed by way of example. These are: Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, Muḥammad bin Ka'ab al-Qurẓī, Abī Ḥāzim Salamah bin Dīnār, al-Qāsim bin Mukhaymarah, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and others. The advice of the scholars consisted of a number of guidelines and instructions that had a connection to 'Umar's political agenda, which proves that 'Umar devised his agenda on the directives he received from them.[3]

To take Muḥammad bin Ka'ab's advice as a case in point, he said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Open the doors, let down the barrier, help the oppressed and redress grievances of the

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 199.

people."[1] Along the same lines, al-Qāsim bin Mukhaymarah exhorted to 'Umar: "We have been informed that whoever assumes authority over the people and dismisses their needs and requirements then Allāh will dismiss his needs and requirements on the Day he meets Him." Upon receiving this information, 'Umar remained silent for a long time and then set out to see the people.[2] Ḥasan al-Baṣrī wrote in one of his letters to 'Umar: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Be a brother to your peers, a son to your elders, a father to your youth, and penalise each of them according to their physical capacity. Do not lash a single whip out of anger, for you will enter the *Nār* (Hellfire)."[3] As we have already mentioned, 'Umar endeavoured to apply guidance of this sort as well as instructing his officials to do the same.[4] A letter rich with guidance and endorsement was that of Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), in which he said to 'Umar: "Indeed, there were men before you who endeavoured to revive what they revived and brought forth what they brought forth until there came about some men who built upon that and regarded that as the *Sunnah*. In doing so, they barricaded the doors of ease and happiness from the people, while they do not obstruct a door to it except that Allāh opens a door of affliction on them. Therefore, if you

(1) *Ibid*, p. 199.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 113.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 103.

(4) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 199.

are able – and there is no might or power save with Allāh – to open up the doors of ease and happiness for the people then do so. Certainly, you will not open a door except that Allāh, the Bountiful, will blockade a door of affliction and prevent you from saying that nobody's deeds are sufficient. In fact, if you aspire to Allāh and endeavour towards Him, Allāh will afford you helpers who He will bring to you." He also went on to say: "Whichever of your officials you choose to deploy to Irāq, you must strictly forbid them by attaching a penalty from taking money and spilling blood unlawfully, since money, O 'Umar, and blood might render no deliverance for you from the pits of Hellfire should you be informed of the injustices of your official and not take measures to change it."[1] This was the type of guidance and advice that helped 'Umar to exert efforts to attain prosperity for his subjects, select his workers and hold them to account.[2]

Their Input in Selecting Officials and Filling Various State Positions:

The active role played by the scholars under 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's administration was not confined to imparting advice and direction to the head of state but it extended to the task of filling the numerous official positions in the different provinces of the state. Among the most influential positions to

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 103.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 199.

state politics were the office of governorship in the provinces and the office of the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury).[1] When we take a look at the governors 'Umar employed over the provinces, we find that the majority of them were actually scholars. To list some of these: the trustworthy Imām and just leader, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Zayd bin al-Khaṭṭāb, as the Governor of Kūfah, the proficient scholar, Abū Bakr bin 'Umar bin Ḥazm, as Governor of al-Madīnah,[2] the senior Imām, Ismā'īl bin Abīal-Hājir, as the Governor of Africa,[3] the jurist and transmitter of *ḥadīth,* 'Udayy bin 'Udayy al-Kundī, as the Governor of the Upper Mesopotamian districts of the Euphrates, Armenia and Azerbaijan,[4] the Imām and judge, 'Ibādah bin Nasī,as the Governor of Jordan,[5] the righteous and trustworthy 'Arwah bin 'Aṭiyyah as-Sa'adī as the Governor of the Yemen,[6] and the virtuous judge, Sālim bin Wābṣah al-'Abdī, as the Governor of Riqqah (North Syria).[7] As for the *Bayt al-Māl,* this was occupied by numerous scholars, such as: the honourable scholar, Maymūn bin Mahrān, as the head of *Kharāj* (Taxes) in Upper Mesopotamia,[8] the righteous

(1) *Ibid,* p. 200.

(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1645/).

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5213/).

(4) *Mukhtaṣir Tārīkh Damashq* [A Concise History of Damascus] (1632/).

(5) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5323/).

(6) *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn Hajr (6186/).

(7) *Mukhtaṣir Tārīkh Damashq* [A Concise History of Damascus] extracted from *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 201.

(8) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 78.

and trustworthy Ṣāliḥ bin Jubayr a▯-▯adā'ī, as the head of *Kharāj* for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz,[1] the scholar, Wahab bin Munnabih, and Abū Zinād, were assigned to the *Bayt al-Māl* in the Yemen, and 'Umar bin Maymūn was appointed to 'Umar's office of post.[2]

It goes without saying that the participation of such prominent and knowledgeable individuals would have been paramount and indispensable in governing matters of state administration and finance and in having a positive impact of the political life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz.[3]

Intellectual Schools during the Reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Umayyad State:

In my book on the person and life of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), I spoke about the intellectual schools and his founding of a school in the State's capital for the purpose of graduating scholars, preachers, governors and judges. These intellectual schools were active in Makkah, al-Madīnah, al-Baṣrah, al-Kūfah, ash-Shām (the Levant), Egypt and elsewhere. Pupils of the schools were taught by the noble *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions). These schools were further capable of graduating distinct cadres in the fields of the sciences, jurisprudence and preaching to support the

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 201.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

military establishment that operated in conquering Irāq, Irān, ash-Shām (the Levant), Egypt and the *Maghrib* (Arab West", i.e. the north western region of North Africa). Those scholars among the *Ṣaḥābah* who spent their time calling people to Islām and teaching them were able to cultivate a generation of individuals learned in the religion of Islām among the people of the open regions that allowed them to overcome linguistic barriers. Rather, a vast number of non-Arabs learned the language of Islām and consequently became pioneers in the movement of knowledge following the age of the non-'Arab *Ṣaḥābah*. In this way, the intellectual schools had a profound impact on the opened regions by forming a generation of *Tābi'īn* (second or third generation followers) who transmitted the knowledge of the *Ṣaḥābah* to the *Ummah,* and in doing so became part of the chain that transmitted to the *Ummah* knowledge of the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). As a result, this favour of transmitting the firsthand knowledge that the *Ṣaḥābah* gained from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) can be accredited, after Allāh, to the intellectual institutions that were set up and active in Makkah, al-Madīnah, al-Baṣrah, al-Kūfah and so on.[1]

It follows that the schools of the *Tābi'īn* continued to be intellectually active during the Umayyad era and many of the scholars who graduated from them went on to assist 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in his project of guided reform and renewal

(1) *Ad-Dowar as-Siyāsī* [The Political Cycle] by aṣ-Ṣafwah, pp. 4623-.

as per the Prophetic path. The most important schools were:

1. ***The School of ash-Shām (the Levant):***

Founded during the reign of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, its most renowned *Ṣaḥābah* were Mu'ādh bin Jabbal, Abū Dardā' and 'Ibād bin aṣ-Ṣāmit (may Allāh be pleased with them). The most prominent *Tābi'ūn* to carry the banner of knowledge, teaching and preaching after the *Ṣaḥābah* were:

- **The Imām and Jurist, Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī, 'Ā'idh bin 'Abdullah:**

A judge and scholar of Damascus, he related narrations on the authority of Abī Dardā', Abī Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās and others. Abū Idrīs was called "the Scholar of ash-Shām" after Abī Dardā'. He said: "I met Abī Dardā' and I memorised (knowledge) from him, 'Ibādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit and Shaddād bin Aws."(1) Abū Idrīs was a reliable source among the people of religious jurisprudence and in the area of *Ḥalāl* (permissible) and *Ḥarām* (forbidden). He was the best reciter of the Qur'ān, about which Yazīd bin 'Ubaydah narrated that he saw Abū Idrīs during the time of 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān. A circle of people were reading and studying the Qur'ān together within a *Masjid* (mosque) in Damascus whilst Abū Idrīs was sitting by one of the pillars and every time the circle came to a Verse that required the act of prostration, they would go to him to recite it as they listened and collectively followed him in

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(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4275/).

prostration. Once they had finished reciting, Abū Idrīs would get up and narrate to them."[1]

According to Yazīd bin Abī Mālik: "We would go to sit with Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī who would speak to us. One day, he spoke with us about some of the *Maghāzī* (warriors; raiders) of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until he covered all of the military expeditions. A man within the assembly asked him: 'Did you attend these expeditions?" He answered in the negative and so the man said: "I attended them alongside the Messenger of Allāh yet you are more erudite in them than I am."[2]

'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān had dismissed Bilāl bin Abī Dardā' from the office of judge and appointed Abū Idrīs[3] to it after having dismissed him as a plagiarist, which caused Abū Idrīs to say: "You discharged me against my wishes and left me in fear."[4] He died in the year 80 AH.[5]

- ***The Jurist,*** Qabīṣah ***bin Dhu'wayb ad-Damashqī:***

He related narrations on the authority of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, Abī ad-Dardā', 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin 'Awf and others. Qabīṣah was a reliable *Tābi'ī* scholar who possessed a vast

(1) *Ibid* (4274/).
(2) *Ibid*.
(3) *Ibid*.
(4) *Ibid*.
(5) *Ibid* (4276/).

knowledge of *ḥadīth*. Ash-Sh'abī said: "He was the most learned person in the jurisprudence of Zayd bin Thābit", and according al-Makḥūl: "I never saw anyone more learned that Qabīṣah."[1] Ibn Shihāb said: "Qabīṣah bin Dhu'wayb was one of the scholars of this *Ummah*."[2] Sources indicate that he died in the year 86, 87 or 88 AH.[3] I have elaborated on his life story in more detail in the section dealing with 'Abd al-Mālik.

- Rajā' bin Ḥaywah al-Filisṭīnī:

One of the most prominent *Tābi'īn* and the *Shaykh* of the people of ash-Shām (the Levant), he narrated *Ḥadīth* from Mu'ādh bin Jabal, Abī ad-Dardā', Ibād bin aṣ-Ṣāmit and numerous others.[4] He was a Levantine, virtuous, reliable and extremely knowledgeable.[5] It is related that Rajā' bin Ḥaywah said: "A person who does not associate except with the faultless has few friends, a person who does not feel genuinely pleased with his friends is permanently dissatisfied and a person who reprimands his friends for every sin has many enemies."[6] Rajā' was held in high esteem by Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Allāh executed a lot of good deeds through his hands.[7] He died in the year

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid* (4559/).
(5) *Al-Fatwā: Nasha'tuhā wa Taṭawartuhā* [The Legal Opinion: 'I established and developed it'] by Dr. Ḥusayn al-Malāḥ, p. 85.
(6) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4558/).
(7) *Ibid* (4560/).

112 AH.[1]

- *Makḥūl ash-Shāmi ad-Damashqi:*

He was the scholar of the people of ash-Shām (the Levant) and a peerless *Tābi'ī* who listened to narrations from Wathilah bin al-Asqa', the last *Ṣaḥābah* to have died in Damascus.[2] He died in 85 AH at the age of 98 years.[3] About him, az-Zuhri said: "There were four scholars: Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib in al-Madīnah, ash-Sha'bi in al-Kūfah, Al-Ḥasan in al-Baṣrah and Makḥūl in ash-Shām.[4] Makhūl was the most learned in jurisprudence in all of ash-Shām and none of his peers looked as youthful as he did.[5] He died in 112 or 113 AH, while other dates have alternatively been suggested.[6]

- *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:*

He was one of the scholars of ash-Shām and al-Madīnah's schools that was after he transferred to ash-Shām and assumed the pressures of the caliphate, and he was known for his knowledge of jurisprudence and the *Sunnah*. Disputed matters would be referred to him for him to pass his judgment on them.[7] This had begun in the Shām school because by this

(1) *Ibid* (4561/).
(2) *Ibid* (3386/).
(3) *Ibid*.
(4) *Ibid* (5158/).
(5) *Ibid* (5159/).
(6) *Ibid* (5159,160/).
(7) *Ad-Da'wah ila Allāh fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal* [Calling to Allāh in the First

time it was thriving in the capital of the Umayyad caliphate.

- *Bilāl bin Sa'ad as-Sakūnī:*

The devout Imām and preacher, 'Amr ad-Damashqī, the *Shaykh* of the people of Damascus whose father was a Companion, was an eloquent admonisher, good narrator and remarkably beneficial to the masses. He was to the people of ash-Shām as Hasan al-Baṣri was in Irāq and he would openly recite in a loud voice to them.(1) Al-Awzā'ī said: "I never heard a more eloquent sermoniser than Bilāl bin Sa'ad."(2) In a pensive admonition, Bilāl said: "O people of godliness! Verily, you were not created to be extinguished but rather you shall move from one abode to another and just as you moved from substance to the womb and from the womb to the world, you shall move from the world to the grave, from the grave to a stopping place and finally, from a stopping place to eternity in *Jannah* (Paradise) or *an-Nār* (Hellfire)."(3) He also said: "Do not look at the smallness of the sin but look at the one who committed it."(4) Al-Awzā'ī said: "I heard him saying: 'By Allāh, it is enough of a sin that Allāh urges us to abstain from this world yet we desire it'."(5) He died over the age of one hundred and ten years.

Abbasid Era] (154/).

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (590,91/).

(2) *Ibid* (591/).

(3) *Ibid*.

(4) *Ibid*.

(5) *Ibid* (592/).

2. The Madīnan School:

After the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) moved to the "Highest Companion", al-Madīnah became the capital of the Islāmic State and home to the Caliphate. It was the place where the intelligence of the *Ṣaḥābah* came to light in the deduction of Islāmic rulings in order to settle the complex affairs with Islāmic societies following the many conquests that had been won. During the reign of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the number of jurists among the *Ṣaḥābah* had reached 130, of which the main motivators were seven: 'Umar, 'Alī and 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Ā'ishah, Zayd bin Thābit, 'Abdullah bin al-'Abbās and 'Abdullah bin 'Umar.(1) From these, the *Tābi'īn* scholars inherited jurisprudence, knowledge, education and preaching, of whom the most prominent were: Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, 'Urwah bin az-Zubayr, 'Umrah bint 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Sa'ad al-Anṣāriyyah, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq, Sulaymān bin Yassār and Nāfi', the servant of Ibn 'Umar.(2) The role played by the *Tābi'īn* scholars and jurists in Madīnah has been mentioned in reference to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's youth and upbringing.

3. The Makkan School:

This school held a special place in the hearts of the

(1) *Al-Madīnah an-Nabuwiyyah: Fajr al-Islām wa al-'Aṣr ar-Rāshidī* [The Prophetic Madinah: The dawn of Islām and the guided age] (245/).

(2) *Al-Fatwā* [Legal Opinion] by Dr. Husayn al-Malāḥ, pp.812-.

believers, its residents, those who longed for Allāh's land of sanctuary, the pilgrims and visitors. Makkah captured the heart of every believer who saw it or even yearned to see it and its reputation for knowledge was prevalent from the time of the *Ṣaḥābah*. This reputation multiplied towards the latter part of their era and hence during the days of the *Tābi'īn* and their companions, such as Ibn Nujayḥ and Ibn Jurayj.[1] In distinction from all others, Makkah was exclusively marked by the "Ink of the *Ummah*" and the Qur'ānic interpretations of Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) who disbursed its grand contents and excelled in knowledge of its *Tafsīr* (Exegesis). Ibn 'Abbās imparted this knowledge to his companions and from them stemmed communities who possessed precedence among the students of the schools of *Tafsīr*. The scholars have mentioned a number of reasons for the superiority of the Makkan school in relation to this knowledge, the main one being the leadership of Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) and his mastership of it. Some of the most famous *Tābi'īn* scholars of the Makkan school were:

- *Mujāhid bin Jabr al-Makkī:*

He studied *Tafṣir* under Ibn 'Abbās and other *Ṣaḥābah*. He was a jurist and scholar who possessed a sound repository of knowledge.[2] He is reported to have said: "I went through

(1) *Al-Madīnah an-Nabuwiyyah: Fajr al-Islām wa al-'Aṣr ar-Rāshidī* [The Prophetic Madinah: The dawn of Islām and the guided age] (248/).

(2) *Al-Fatwā* [Legal Opinion] by Dr. Husayn al-Malāḥ, p. 80.

the *Qur'ān* three times with Ibn 'Abbās. I would stop at every *Ayah* (Verse) and ask him about its occasion of revelation."[1] Qatādah said: "The most learned in interpretation was Mujāhid."[2] Mujāhid said: "I befriended Ibn 'Umar and I wanted to serve him, though he would serve me."[3] Mujāhid gave priority to Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik and next to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz whose death he also witnessed. Mujāhid said: "During his fatal illness, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to me: 'O Mujāhid! What are the people saying about me?' So I said: 'They are saying he has been afflicted by magic'. He remarked: 'I have not been afflicted by magic'. 'Umar then called on a servant boy and said to him: 'Woe unto you! What brought you to poison me?' The boy answered: 'I was given a thousand *Dinar* and told that I would be emancipated'. So 'Umar said: 'Give it to me', upon which the boy brought the money to him and 'Umar deposited it in the *Bayt al-Māl.* He then said to him: 'Go to where nobody will find you'."[4] Mujāhid also said: "I do not which of two blessings is the greatest: my guidance to Islām or being cured of these heretic beliefs."[5] In reference to Mujāhid saying, adh-Dhahabī said: "Such as those pertaining to dissension, fate and negation."[6] 'Abd al-Wahhāb bin Mujāhid is reported to have said: "I was with my father when his son Ya'qūb came to him and said: 'O father!

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(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4451/).

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid* (4452/).

(4) *Ibid* (4453/).

(5) *Ibid* (4455/).

(6) *Ibid.*

Indeed, we have associates to claim that the faith of the heavenly people and the faith of the earthy people are one'. So he said: 'O son! Those are not my associates. Certainly, Allāh does not make the one immersed in error like the one who is sinless'."[1] Mujāhid died in the year 102 AH while he was in prostration,[2] aged 83 years.[3]

- 'Ikrimah, the Servant of Ibn 'Abbās:

He was a Makkan *Tābi'ī* of the highest intellectual authority. He narrated traditions from Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ā'ishah, Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Amr, 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir and 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.[4] He said: "I sought knowledge for forty years. I would issue a *Fatwa* (legal opinion) at the door whilst Ibn 'Abbās was in the house. 'Ikrimah narrated that Ibn 'Abbās would say to him: "Go out and issue *Fatāwā* (pl. legal opinions) to whoever asks about what concerns him. As for those who ask about what does not concern them, do not issue *Fatāwā* to them. Verily, a third of the people's provisions will be presented to you."[5]

'Ikrimah possessed a large number of books, he travelled to Africa[6] and he had denounced the *Ṣafriyyah* sect of

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'ad* [The Classes of Ibn Sa'ad] (5467/); *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4455/).

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4456/).

(4) *Ibid* (513/).

(5) *Ibid* (515/).

(6) *Ibid.*

Kharijites, although this latter claim is not authenticated by a sound chain of narration but based on hearsay.(1) The people of *al-Jarḥ wa at-Ta'dīl* (the science of criticizing and praising) defend 'Ikrimah, such as Abī Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, Ibn Ḥabbān, al-'Ajlī, Ibn Mundah and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. Ibn Ḥajar cites this in his introduction to *al-Fatḥ* (the Conquest), saying: "An innovation cannot authentically be attributed to him."(2) Al-Bukhāri said: "None of our companions objected to 'Ikrimah."(3) He died in the year 105 AH.(4)

- *'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabbāḥ:*

The *Muftī* (Expounder of Islāmic Law) of the *Ḥaram* (Sanctuary at Makkah) and one of the leading jurists, he narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Hurayrah, Umm Salamah, 'Āishah, Rāfi' bin Khudayj, Zayd bin Arqam, Ibn Zubayr, Ibn 'Amr, Ibn 'Umar, Jābir, Mu'āwiyah, Abī Sa'īd and a number of the *Ṣaḥābah*.(5) He was a reliable jurist and scholar who transmitted a large number of *Ḥadīth* and issued legal opinions to the people of Makkah. Ibn 'Abbās said: "O people of Makkah! You gather around me when you have 'Aṭā' with his extensive knowledge and outstanding capacity." During the Umayyad era, a crier would be ordered to call out during the *Ḥajj* (Pilgrimage) season: "None other than 'Atā' bin

(1) *Barā'at as-Salaf mimā Nasb ilayhim min Inḥirāf fī al-I'tiqād* [Exonerating the Pious Predecessors from the Deviation Attributed]

(2) *Muqaddimah al-Fatḥ* [The Introduction to *The Conquest*], p. 428.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (531/).

(4) *Ibid* (534/).

(5) *Ibid* (5/79).

Rabbāḥ may issue legal opinions to the people." He died on the year 115 AH.(1)

These were just some of the scholars belonging to the Makkan school who tended to the burden of preaching, teaching and completing the intellectual constitution.(2)

4. The School of Baṣrah:

This competed with al-Kufah in every discipline and was attended by many *Ṣaḥābah,* including Abū Mūsā al-'Ash'arī, 'Imrān bin Ḥaṣīn, Anas bin Mālik, and others. Anas bin Mālik is esteemed as the principal *shaykh* of *Tābi'īn* scholars like Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sulaymān at-Tamīmī, Thābit al-Bunānī, Rabī'ah bin Abī Abd ar-Raḥmān, Ibrāhīm bin Abī Maysarah, Muḥammad bin Sirīn, Qatādah and so on.(3) The most prominent scholars of the Baṣrah School included:

- Muḥammad bin Sīrīn al-Baṣrī:

He was a servant of Anas bin Mālik. He heard narrations from Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Hurayrah and the likes of them.(4) Habīb bin ash-Shahīd said: "I was with 'Amr bin Dīnār

(1) *Al-Fatwā* [Legal Opinion] by Dr. Husayn al-Malāḥ, p. 81; *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (578/).

(2) *Ad-Da'wah ila Allāh fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal* [Calling to Allāh in the First Abbasid Era] (141/).

(3) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (14239/); 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb by aṣ-Ṣulābī, p. 260.

(4) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4606/).

who said: 'By Allāh! I have never seen anyone like Ṭāwūs'. So Ayūb as-Sukhtiyānī who was sitting down said: 'By Allāh! If he saw Muḥammad bin Sirīn he would not say that.'"[1] 'Uthmān al-Batī said: "Baṣrah has never seen a more learned person in legal knowledge than Ibn Sirīn."[2] Ḥasan al-Baṣrī gave him preference over others, which is attested to by the narration of Thābit al-Bunānī who said: "Al-Ḥasan was in hiding from al-Ḥajjāj when his daughter died and so I hastened to Rajā' to tell him to offer the prayer over him. However, he began to cry until he wailed in lamentation, then he said to me: 'Go to Muḥammad bin Sirīn and tell him to pray over her'. The reason for this was, in truth, he knew that nobody compared to Ibn Sirīn."[3]

Muḥammad bin Sirīn would fast every other day.[4] He was particularly renowned for his extraordinary skill in interpreting dreams, as attested by adh-Dhahabi who said: "Ibn Sirīn would perform wonders as if he had some divine assistance to help him in that."[5] He would ordinarily wear simple garments, shawl like garments worn over his head and shoulders, and turbans.[6] He would laugh and joke often[7] and he was good to his mother, as Ḥafṣah bint Sirīn said: "Muḥammad's mother was from the Ḥijāz and he would dye

(1) *Ibid* (4608/).

(2) *Ibid*.

(3) *Ibid* (4610/).

(4) *Ibid* (4615/).

(5) *Ibid* (4618/).

(6) *Ibid* (4619/).

(7) *Ibid* (4613/).

fabrics. Whenever he bought a garment for her, he would buy the softest one he could find. When it was 'the *Īd* (Festival), he would dye a garment for her. I never once saw him raise his voice to her and if they were talking together, he would listen attentively."[1] Ibn 'Awn said that if a man who did not know Muḥammad were to see him when he was talking with his mother, he would think that he had some illness that caused him to speak in such a low tone.[2] He died one hundred days after Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, aged 110 years.[3]

5. The School of al-Kūfah:

Three hundred "Companions of the Tree" (those who pledged allegiance to the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), under the tree) and seventy Badris (veterans of the battle of Badr) (may Allāh be pleased with them all) stayed in al-Kūfah. 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb showed great interest in al-Kūfah and he sent 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd there, who diligently endeavoured to form a generation of people for the purpose of calling to the way of Allāh. He subsequently had an enormous impact on the individuals who became loyal to the cause, or those who came after him, such that a group of Ibn Mas'ūd's students became famous in the fields of jurisprudence, knowledge, asceticism and for their fear in Allāh. Some of his students included 'Alqamah bin Qays, Masrūq bin al-Ajda', 'Ubaydah as-Salmānī, al-Aswad

(1) *Ibid* (4619/).
(2) *Ibid* (4620/).
(3) *Ibid* (4621/).

bin Yazīd, al-Ja'fī and others.[1] The most prominent scholars of the Kūfan School were:

- ***'Āmir bin Sharḥabīl ash-Sha'bī:***

He was the luminary of his age and the most learned in jurisprudence among his contemporaries. He narrated traditions from 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Umar, Sa'ad bin Abī Waqāṣ, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Jamharah and so many more that it was said he met more than five hundred *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions).[2] For this reason, he had retained a great deal of knowledge, as Muḥammad bin Sirīn said: "I had seen him asking for legal opinions at the time when there were many *Ṣaḥabah* in al-Kūfah. Despite his extensive knowledge, he would hold back from giving a *Fatwa* such that, more often than not, he would only say 'I do not know', because he would consider it merely half of the knowledge."[3] Ash-Sha'bī said: "Verily, we are not jurists but we merely narrate the *Aḥadīth* that we heard, whereas if a jurist learns something, he does it."[4] One of his sarcastic jokes was related by al-'A'mash, who said: "A man came to ash-Sha'bi and said: 'What is the name of *Iblīs*' (the Devil) wife?' Ash-Sha'bi answered: 'That was a wedding that I never witnessed'."[5] He died in the year 104 AH, while some

(1) *Faṣl* al-Khaṭṭāb *fī Sīrat Amīr al-Mu'minīn* 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb [The Section of Speech in the Biography of the Commander of the Faithful: 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb], p. 264.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4298/).

(3) *Al-Fatwā* [Legal Opinion] by Dr. Husayn al-Malāḥ, p. 83.

(4) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4303/).

(5) *Ibid* (4312/).

maintain 106 or 105 AH.(1)

- Hammād bin Abī Salamah:

Jurist to the people of 'Irāq, he narrated on the authority of Anas bin Mālik and he was a student of Ibrāḥīm an-Nakh'ī. He was the most noble, most learned in jurisprudence and most perspicacious of his peers.(2) He was one of the most honourable and open-handed intellectuals and he possessed great wealth, bashfulness and charm.(3) The most learned among the people of al-Kūfah was 'Alī and Ibn Mas'ūd, and the most learned of his companions was 'Alqamah, and the most learned of his was Ibrāhīm, and the most learned of his was Ḥammād, and the most learned of his was Abū Ḥanīfah, and the most learned of his was Abū Yūsuf whose companions spread across the horizon, of whom the most learned was Muḥammad, and the most learned of his companions was Abū 'Abdullah ash-Shāfi'ī(4) (may Allāh have mercy on them). Ḥammād died in the year 120 AH.

6. The Yemeni School:

Among the most prominent *Ṣaḥābah* and contributors to spreading Islām in Yemen were Mu'ādh bin Jabl, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and others. Whoever wants

(1) *Ibid* (4318/).

(2) *Al-Fatwā* [Legal Opinion] by Dr. Husayn al-Malāḥ, p. 83.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4231/).

(4) *Ibid* (4236/).

to delve into this in detail should refer to the treatise of Dr 'Abdullah al-Ḥamīrī: *al-Ḥadīth wa al-Muḥaddithūn fi al-Yemen fi 'Aṣr aṣ-Ṣaḥābah* [Prophet Narrations and their Transmitters in Yemen During the Era of the Companions]. As for the most prominent *Ṭābi'īn* scholars of the Yemeni School, these were:

- *Ṭāwūs bin Kīsān:*

Jurist and exemplar to the people of the Yemen, he was the most knowledgeable among his *Ṭābi'īn* peers in matters of the *Halāl* (lawful) and the *Ḥarām* ('prohibited). He related on the authority of a group of the noble *Ṣaḥābah,* such as Zayd bin Thābit, Abū Hurayrah, Zayd bin Arqam and Ibn 'Abbās. His contemporaries thereby classed him as one of the greatest.(1) He also narrated on the authority of Mu'adh by transmitter.(2) He was originally from Persia and among those who had been deployed by Khosrau (designation of the Persian kings in general) to take Yemen.(3) He was an important and gracious jurist to the people of the Yemen.(4) He met fifty of the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).(5) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to him during Sulaymān's reign: "Raise your needs to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*." He said: "I have no need from him", upon

(1) *Ibid* (539/).
(2) *Ibid*.
(3) *Ibid* (538/).
(4) *Al-Fatwā: Nasha'tuhā wa Taṭawartuhā* [The Legal Opinion: 'I established and developed it'] by Dr. Ḥusayn al-Malāḥ, p. 85.
(5) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (543/).

which 'Umar was surprised.[1]

Ṭāwūs once said: "A young man's piety is not complete until he marries."[2] And he said: "Miserliness is to withhold what one possesses from a man and avarice is to want what others possess for one's self."[3] Regarding Ṭāwūs, Qays bin Sa'ad said: "Ṭāwūs to us is like Ibn Sirīn to you." He would seclude himself from the governors and leaders out of his hatred of working for them. If someone requested his advice, he would not flatter anyone or distort the truth in any way. He died in Makkah in the year 106 AH.[4]

- ***Wahb bin Munabbih:***

Abū 'Abdullah Wahb bin Munnabih was a man of Persian descent from Dhimār in the Yemen. Wahb is said to have read many books. He was an extremely prolific narrator of Prophetic stories and Biblical personages and he was an ardent seeker of knowledge.[5] Adh-Dhahabi says: "He was the honourable Imām and well-versed narrator of stories." Al-'Ajlī says: "He was a trustworthy *Tābi'ī* and a judge over San'ā." Shīrāzī mentions that he was one of the *Tābi'ī* jurists of the Yemen.[6] He was said to be wise and astute and he

(1) *Ibid* (541/).

(2) *Ibid* (542/).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5541/); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 666.

(4) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (549/).

(5) *'Ulamā al-Amṣār* [The Scholars of the Major Cities] by al-Bastī, p. 123.

(6) *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahāt* [The Classes of the Jurists], p. 66.

had some influence in supressing the Kharijites of the Yemen and warning the people against listening to their views.(1)

The following conversation took place between Abī Shamr al-Khawlānī and Wahb bin Munabbih when Abī Shamr al-Khawlāni entered upon him in the company of Dawūd bin Qays. Dawūd spoke to Wahb, saying that his companion, Abī Shamr al-Khawlānī, was among the people of the Qur'ān and goodness, that he knew him well and that he had informed him that a group of people from Ḥarūrā (i.e. the Kharijites) had confronted him by saying that the *Zakāt* (alms) that he pays to the commanders does not count because they do not put it to proper use. Dawūd then said to Wahb: "I believe what you say to be better than what I say." So Wahb said: "O Khawlānī, do you want to testify to the arrogance of a Ḥarūrī who is more lost than you? What will you say to Allāh tomorrow when He confronts you about it? Who do you testify to? By Allāh, he testifies to Him with faith, while you to him with disbelief. By Allāh, he testifies to him with guidance, while you testify to him with misguidance. Where will you be if your opinion violates Allāh's laws and your testimony is the testimony of Allāh? Tell me, O Khawlānī, what do they say to you?"

So he spoke about it and said to Wahb: "They ordered me to not give alms to anyone who does not subscribe to their view and to not seek forgiveness except for one who does."

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 667.

Wahb said: "You have given alms and their ordeal is certainly false. As for what they say about alms, I have been informed that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned that a woman from Yemen entered the Hellfire for tying up her cat,[1] therefore although this person worshipped Allāh Alone and did not associate any partners in worship with Him, it was more beloved to Allāh to feed the cat from hunger. Allāh says: "*And they give food, in spite of their love for it (of for the love of Him) to the 'miskīn' ('needy'), the orphan and the captive.*" (*al-Insān,* 76:8) As for their statement, they do not repent except for those who share their views. Are they then better than the Angels, for Allāh says: "*Nearly the heavens might be rent asunder from above by them (by His Majesty) and the angels glorify the praises of their Lord, and ask for forgiveness for those on the earth. Verily, Allāh is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful]* (*ash-Shūrā,* 42:5) By Allāh, the Angels did not do that until they were ordered: "*They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His Command.*" (*an-Anbiyā,* 21:27). And it says: "*They ask forgiveness for those who believe.*" (*Ghāfir,* 40:7)" He continued to discuss with him in this manner to the point that Khawlāni said: "What do you order me to do?" He replied: "Look at your *Zakat* and give it to whomever Allāh has entrusted with authority over this *Ummah* and join with them in it, as the sovereignty is from Allāh Alone and by His Hand He gives it to whomever He wills. If you gave it to the heir, you have been acquitted of it and if that were better, then you

(1) *Muslim*, no. 2242.

have severed ties with your kin, supporters, neighbours and guests." So he said: "I declare that I have renounced the view of the Ḥarūriyyah (i.e. Kharijites)."[1]

Wahb (may Allāh have mercy on him) died in the year 110 AH during the reign of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik.[2] It is said that Yūsuf bin 'Umar, the then Governor of the Yemen, beat him to death,[3] which perhaps happened because of Wahb's stance against the open oppression and violence carried out by Yūsuf bin 'Umar.[4]

7. The Egyptian School:

The school established in Egypt constituted religious leaders from among the *Ṣaḥābah* who travelled there after the days of the Conquest and settled in al-Fusṭāṭ (ancient Islāmic city south of present-day Cairo) and Alexandria. These included 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ, az-Zubayr bin al-'Awwām, the *Ṣāḥābī* who had the largest impact on Egypt, 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir (may Allāh be pleased with him),[5] and many more *Ṣaḥābah* to whom preaching and cultivating the people in the way of their religion can

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4555/).

(2) *Ibid* (4556/); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 667.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4556/).

(4) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 667.

(5) 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb by aṣ-Ṣullābī, p. 270.

be accredited.[1] Thereby, a class of *Ṭābi'īn* was fostered to become leaders and preachers, among whom were:

- *Yazīd bin Abī Ḥabīb:*

The great Imām and *Muftī* (One who issues legal rulings) of Egypt, Abū Rajā' al-Azdī, was one of the most active and God-fearing scholars despite the fact that he was a black slave.[2] Al-Layth bin Sa'ad said: "Yazīd bin Abī Ḥabīb was our master and teacher."[3] He died in the year 128 AH.[4]

8. The School of North Africa:

The conquering commanders entered North Africa under the leadership of 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ, then 'Abdullah bin Sa'ad bin Abī as-Sarḥ (may Allāh be pleased with them). Mu'āwiyah bin Ḥudaj subsequently conquered Africa and Mu'āwiyah bin Abī Sufyān took control of Egypt and Africa. After him came 'Uqbah bin Nāfi' al-Fahrī who planned the city of Kairouan (in Tunisia) and attained a good reputation among the natives as one of their best governors and preachers to have fought and preached with sword and word. He then vested righteous leaders with authority over Africa to implement the same agenda as his.[5] During the period of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-

(1) *Ad-Da'wah ila Allāh fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal* [Calling to Allāh in the First Abbasid Era] (157/).
(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (631/).
(3) *Ibid* (632/).
(4) *Ibid*.
(5) *Al-Bayān al-Maghrib lil-Marākish* (119/); *Ad-Da'wah ila Allāh fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī*

'Azīz's caliphate, he designated Isma'īl bin Abī al-Muhājir as a governor over Africa in the year 100 AH. There, he served as an exponent of Islām in word, deed and manner so much so that the people loved him and came to love his religion. He endeavoured to call the Berbers to Islām and accordingly they responded to his call by embracing Islām at his hands. Isma'īl took an interest in teaching people the Islāmic injunctions and edifying them on the rulings of *Ḥalāl* (permissible) and *Ḥarām* (forbidden).(1)

A discussion of the above-mentioned ten jurists shall be dealt with in due course, by the will of Allāh. As for what we have just said about the intellectual schools, this emphasizes the importance of inherited, transmitted knowledge, the preaching expertise of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) and the expanses across the regions of the Islāmic State they covered. We have also seen the benefits a group of intellectuals brought about by making themselves available to teach, educate, issue *Fatāwa,* guide, sermonise and convey the message among the people.

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al-Awwal [Calling to Allāh in the First Abbasid Era] (161/).

(1) *Ibid* (148/); *Ad-Da'wah ila Allāh fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal* [Calling to Allāh in the First Abbasid Era] (162/).

VI: The *Tābi'īn* Method of Qur'ān Exegesis:

The *Tābi'īn* (second and third generation followers) followed a clear method of Qur'ān interpretation whereby they would undertake Qur'ān interpretation through taking recourse to the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), the sayings of the *Ṣaḥābah,* the Arabic language, *Ijtihād* (the use of reason and the mind) and the power of deduction.

1- The Qur'ān *Explained by the* Qur'ān*:*

The *Tābi'ūn* had various ways of explaining the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān. These ways were as follows:

- The Intertextuality of the Holy Qur'ān:

Interpreting one *Āyah* (Verse) by referring to another *Āyah* from the Qur'ān that both allude to the same subject but use different expressions. The majority of the *Tābi'īn* conformed to this type of *Tafsīr,* such as Mujāhid in the case of explaining the words: "*Then Ādam received from His Lord Words.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:37) He said: "The Saying: "*They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy…*" (*al-A'rāf,* 7:23) to end

of the Verse."[1] 'Ikrimah reported that in terms of the best way to explain the Saying of Allāh: *'And offer your prayer neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way in between'* of Allah be (*al-Isrā',* 17:110), the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to pray in a loud voice but this used to annoy the *Mushrikīn* (Idolaters) in Makkah to the point that he and the *Ṣaḥābah* began to hide their prayers. For this reason, Allāh said: *'And offer your prayer neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way in between.'* (*al-Isrā',* 17:110) He also said in *al-A'rāf*: *'And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear and without loudness in words, in the mornings and the afternoons, and be not one of those who are neglectful.'* (7:205).

In explaining the Saying of Allāh, the Sublime: "*Say to (them): 'If the Home of the Hereafter with Allāh is indeed for you specially and not for others, of mankind, then long for death if you are truthful.'"* (*al-Baqarah,* 2:94), Qatādah said: "That is in reference to those who said in the Verse: "*And they say: 'None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian'"* (*al-Baqarah,* 2:111) And they said: "*We are the children of Allāh and His loved ones."* (*al-Mā'idah,* 5:18), upon which it was said to them: "*Then long for death if you are truthful."*"[2]

(1) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (1545/); *Zād al-Masīr* by Ibn al-Jawzī (169/).

(2) *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* [The Victory of the Almighty] (1116/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2614/).

- Drawing Similar Comparisons:

What is meant by *al-Ashbāh* (lit. similarity) is to explain the *Ayah* (Verse) using similar *Ayāt* (verses), such as explaining a verse through other Verses that convey meanings close to it.[(1)] An example of this can be drawn from Mujāhid's interpretation of the word "self" to mean something else whereby in his explanation of the Verse: "*Why then did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it (the slander), think good of their own people*" (*an-Nūr*, 24:12), he said: "He told them to think good, since do you not see that Allāh says elsewhere: "*And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another)*." (*an-Nisā'*, 4:28) He is therefore saying "one another", as in the Verse: "But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allāh (i.e. 'peace be upon you')." (*an-Nūr*, 24:61) Hence, Allāh tells the people greet each other."[(2)] Here, Mujāhid explained "self" to mean something else based on the evidence he drew from the different contexts in which the word is used in a similar manner in other Verses of the Qur'ān.[(3)]

- Placing Significance on Interpreting by Context:

With this type of interpreting, the *Mufassīr* (exegete) looks

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(1) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2615/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (1896/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2615/).

(3) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2616/).

at the context of the *Ayah* and either relates it the *Ayāh* before it or the one after it, whether that be one *ayah* or a group of *ayāt*.(1) A case in point is Mujāhid's interpretation of Allāh's statement: "*And that was Our Proof which we gave Ibrāhīm* (Abraham) against his people" (*al-An'ām,* 6:83). He says it can be explained by the previous Verse: "*It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allāh and worship Him Alone) and confuse not their belief with 'ẓulm' ('wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allāh')*" (*ibid:* 82)(2)

- Clarifying Generalisations:

With this method of *Tafsīr,* the *Mufassir* interprets *Ayāt* of the Qur'ān that generalise by drawing on other *Ayāt* that might clarify this generalisation. This is illustrated by Mujāhid's interpretation of Allāh's Words: "*He has created you in (different) stages.*" (*Nūḥ,* 71:14) He says: "In other words, from clay into semen into a clot of thick coagulated blood into a lump of flesh, and so on until He forms His creation.(3) Allāh clarifies this statement of His in other *ayāt* of similar content, such as the verse:

> "*And indeed We created man (Ādam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth). Thereafter, We made him (the offspring Ādam) as a 'nuṭfah' (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging*

(1) *Ibid* (2617/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (1896/).

(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (2629/); *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr* [The Scattered Pearls: Intertextual Exegesis] by as-Suyūti (8291/).

(womb of the woman). Then We made the 'Nuṭfah' into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought if forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allāh, the Best of creators." (*al-Mu'minūn*, 23:12-14)

- Explaining the General with the Specific:

According to this principle, the *Mufassir* supports *Ayāt* that appear to be general or ambiguous by drawing on one definition of that general Verse,(1) such as Allāh's Statement: "*Whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof.*" (*an-Nisā'*, 4:123) Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī says: "This refers to the *Kāfir* (disbeliever)", then he recited the Verse: "*And never do We requite in such a way except those who are ungrateful (disbelievers)*" (*Sabā'*, 34:17), i.e. the *kuffār* (disbelievers).(2) Another narration states that he said: "[*And never do We requite in such a way except those who are ungrateful (disbelievers)*] (*ibid*) means the *Kuffār* and not those who observe prayer."(3) In the above example, the former *Ayah* generalises in its use of the word "whosoever", which could be understood to generally refer to a believer and disbeliever. However, Al-Ḥasan clarified that is has a more specific

(1) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2621/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (9237/); *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr* [The Scattered Pearls: Intertextual Exegesis] by as-Suyūti (2210/).

(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (9238/).

meaning by proving its restriction in the latter Verse.[1] He more lucidly explains the Verse by saying that the Verse: [*Whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof*] (*an-Nisā'*, 4:123) "refers to those who Allāh wants to disgrace. As for those He wants to honour, they are from the people of *Jannah* (Paradise), as He says: "*They shall be among the dwellers of Paradise – a promise of truth, which they have been promised.*" (*al-Aḥqāf*, 46:16)[2]

Adequate Interpretation:

What is meant by adequate interpretation is that the *Mufassir* does not explicitly interpret the *Ayah* under question, but instead gives an adequate interpretation of it by relating it to another *Ayah*. This is demonstrated by Sa'īd bin Jabīr's explanation of Allāh's Statement: "*Truly, to Allāh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.*" (*al-Baqarah*, 2:156), saying: "If it were granted to anyone, it should be granted to Ya'qūb. Do you not hear (the saying of Allāh): [*Alas! My grief for Yūsuf* (Joseph)" (*Yūsuf*, 12:84)?[3] Thus, he should have said "*Truly, to Allāh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return]* instead of feeling sorrow for Yusūf's departure."[4]

(1) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2623/).
(2) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2623/).
(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (3224/).
(4) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2623/).

- *Clarifying Ambiguities:*

Another method of interpretation that was carried out by the *Tābi'īn* was to clarify an obscure *Ayah* with another *Ayah* to remove any ambiguity.(1) This was 'Ikrimah's approach to lifting the obscurity surrounding the word "period (of time)" whereby he pointed to an *Ayah* that indicates an exact period "one year." It is reported that he said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to me, saying: 'O servant of Ibn 'Abbās! I swore that I would not do such and such a thing for a "period (of time)." Therefore, how would you define a "period (of time)"?' So I replied: 'Verily, there is the "period (of time)" that is fixed and there is the "period (of time)" that is not fixed. As for that which is not fixed, Allāh says: "*Has there not been over man a period of time when he was not a thing worth mentioning?*" (*al-Insān,* 76:1) By Allāh! It is not known how long this lasted over creation. But as for that which is known, He says: "*Giving its fruits at all times, by the Leave of its Lord.*" (*Ibrāhīm,* 14:25), i.e. this indicates what comes between one year and next. Hence, 'Umar remarked: 'You are right, O servant of Ibn 'Abbās! It could not have been said better.'"(2)

- *Showing the Meaning of a Word or Clarifying a Problem:*

This method of *Tafsīr* was mainly carried out by the *Tābi'īn* who sought to handle Qur'ānic Verses by interpreting their

(1) *Ibid* (2624/).
(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (16581/).

meaning using other Qur'ānic Verses. In this manner, the words spoke for themselves,(1) such as in the case of Ḥasan al-Baṣri's interpretation of: "*On the Day (when the first blowing of the trumpet is blown), the earth and the mountains will shake violently (and everybody will die)*] (*an-Nāzi'āt*, 79:6). He says: "This alludes to 'two blows': with the first, all life shall be made to die; as for the second, the dead will be brought to life", then Ḥasan continued: "[*And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allāh wills. Then it will be blown a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on (waiting)]* (*az-Zumar*, 39:68)."(2)

There are ample examples illustrating how the *Tābi'īn* interpreted the Qur'ān using the Qur'ān, which can be referred to in *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* "The Interpretation of the Second and Third Generation Followers".(3)

1. The Qur'ān Explained by the Sunnah (Prophetic Example):

There are numerous examples of explanation of the Qur'ān by the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who either himself asked the Angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) for explanation of matters not clear to him , or who was asked by

(1) *Ibid* (2626/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (3031/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2627/).

(3) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2627-608/).

the *Ṣaḥābah* about the Qur'ān. This was done for the purpose of reviewing the meanings of the Book, outlining its details, clarifying obscurities or expanding on its conciseness.(1) The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was therefore the most knowledgeable regarding Allāh's Speech and possessed the greatest capacity of all to understand the meanings of its verses owing to the inspiration he received from Allāh, the Sublime. Regarding the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Allāh says: "*Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed]* (*an-Najm,* 53:3-4). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I have been given the Qur'ān and something like it."(2) Ibn Taymiyyah says: "If He said it, it was said. Is there a better way to explain the Qur'ān than this?" Thus, the answer he gave was that the most accurate method is to explain the Qur'ān through the Qur'ān, and then he went on say that if this proves difficult, to refer to the *Sunnah* next, as this represents a description and clarification of the Qur'ān. In the words of Imām Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad bin Idrīs ash-Shāfi'ī, everything the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined was owing to his understanding of the Qur'ān.

Allāh says:

- "*Surely, We have sent down to you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) the Book*

(1) *Ibid* (2628/); *al-Mawāqifāt* (412/).

(2) *Sunan Abī Dawūd,* no. 4604.

(this Qur'ān*) in truth that you might judge between men by that which Allāh has shown you (i.e. has taught you through Divine Revelation), so be not a pleader for the treacherous.*" (*an-Nisā,* 4:105)

- And He says: "*And We have also sent down to you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) the 'dhikr' (reminder and the advice, i.e. the* Qur'ān*) that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.*" (*an-Naḥl,* 16:44)
- And He said: "*And We have sent down the Book (the* Qur'ān*) to you* (O Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) except that you may explain clearly to them those things in which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a folk who believe.*" (*an-Naḥl,* 16:64)

The scholars agree that resorting to the *Sunnah* is compulsory, acting in accordance with it is necessary and ruling by it is a requirement. On this subject, Makḥūl, the *Tābi'ī,* said: "The Qur'ān makes necessary for the *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* for the Qur'ān."(1) The many transmissions attributable to the *Tābi'īn* testify to their firm adherence to the *Sunnah,* as Rabī'ah enquired to az-Zuhrī: "If you are asked about a problem, how do you go about it?" He answered: "I narrate what the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said about it. If it has not been reported from the

(1) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2629/); *Tafsīr* al-Qurṭubī [The Interpretation of al-Qurṭubī] (130/).

Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then I narrate what the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) said about it, and in the event there is nothing on the authority of the *Ṣaḥābah* then I derive my own independent ruling."[1]

Another indication of the great care and attention they gave to narrate on the authority of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the fact that we find a lack of contradiction to the authentic interpretations of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on their part. Below are some examples of that:

- The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interpreted the words: "*not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor those who went astray*" (*al*-Fātiḥ*ah,* 1:6), by saying: "The Jews earned Allāh's Anger and the Christians went astray."[2] In view of this, Mujāhid,[3] Sa'īd bin Jubayr,[4] and others interpreted it in the same way. Ibn Ḥātim says: "I do not know of any disagreement between the *Mufassirīn* that ["*those who earned Your Anger"]* refers to the Jews and ["*those who went astray*"] refers to the Christians.[5]
- It is authentically reported that the Prophet (may peace

(1) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Faḍlihi* [Explaining Knowledge and its Merit] (275/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2637/).

(2) *Mawār aẓ-Ẓamān fī Zawā'id Ibn* Ḥabbān, no. 224.

(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (1188/).

(4) *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr [The Scattered Pearls: Intertextual Exegesis] by as-Suyuti*

(5) *Tafsīr Ibn Abī* Ḥātim, no. 22; *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2637/.)

and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained the Statement: "*And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:187), by saying: "This is the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day."[1] None of the *Tābi'īn* dispute this interpretation and it is the view of Al-Ḥasan[2] and Qatādah.[3]

- The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) interpreted the word *Ẓulm* in the Verse: "*It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allāh and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their belief with Ẓulm, for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.*" (*an-An'ām,* 6:82) when the *Ṣaḥābah* enquired: "Which of us do not confuse our belief with *Ẓulm*?" by saying: "It is not that. Have you not heard that Luqmān said: "*Verily, joining others in worship with Allāh is a great ẓulm.*" (*Luqmān,* 31:13)?"[4] This is narrated by the *Tābi'īn* Ibrāhīm an-Nakh'ī, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Sa'īd bin Jubayr.[5]
- The Prophet's interpretation of "*as-Saba'a al-Mathāni* (the Seven Repeatedly Recited Verses)": Allāh says: "*And indeed, We have bestowed upon you seven repeatedly recited Verses and the Grand* Qur'ān." (*al-*

(1) *Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb at-Tafsīr* [The Book of Exegesis](8/294).
(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (3510/).
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Al-Bukhārī* (8294/).
(5) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2639/).

Ḥijr, 15:87). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Abī Sa'īd al-Ma'lā: "Should I not inform you of the greatest Verse in the Qur'ān before I leave the *masjid* (mosque)?" As he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was about to leave, I therefore reminded him about it, and so he said: "Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds" (i.e. *Sūrat al*-Fātiḥ*ah*) are the seven oft-recited Verses and the Grand Qur'ān is that which comes after it."[1] This interpretation is related by Sa'īd bin Jubayr, Al-Ḥasan, Mujāhid and Qatādah.[2]

- The Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explanation of the term *"ummat wasṭ"* in the Verse: "*Thus We have made you a 'ummat wasṭ' ('just nation') that you will be witnesses over mankind*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:143) is given in the *Ḥadīth* in which he (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "It means 'just'."[3] This is the explanation given by Mujāhid, 'Aṭā' and Qatādah.[4]

3. The Qur'ān Explained by the Sayings of the Companions:

After explanation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān by the Prophet himself, ranks the explanation of the

(1) *Al-Bukhārī* (8381/).

(2) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2641/).

(3) *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (6316/); narrated by Aḥmad (39/).

(4) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2651/).

Qur'ān by the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions). The *Tābi'īn* were not taught how to receive the Book and the *Sunnah*, and hence the practice of deducing independent legal opinion and the like, except owing to their upbringing at the hands of the *Ṣaḥābah* who imparted to them the knowledge of their methods of reasoning, drawing conclusions, reception of Prophetic narrations and their outlook on how to practically apply all of these things. Accordingly, the *Tābi'īn* absorbed the message of the *Ṣaḥābah* and were acquainted with their merit, as Mujāhid said: "The scholars are the Companions of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."(1) In keeping with this, the *Tābi'īn* would give preference to the sayings of the *Ṣaḥābah* over their own, as ash-Sha'bī says: "If the people differ on something, look at how 'Umar dealt with it. Certainly, 'Umar would not do anything until he took counsel." Narrating that tradition, Ash'ath said: "I mentioned that to Ibn Sirīn and he said: 'If a man tells you he is more knowledgeable that 'Umar then warn him against it."(2)

The methods in which the *Tābi'īn* obtained knowledge from the *Ṣaḥābah* revolved around:

- Whether the explanation of the *Ṣaḥābī* was directly narrated from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): This is fundamental requirement

(1) *I'lām al-Mawqū'īn* (115/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2651/).

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (4320/); *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2653/).

and the ultimate goal that is the be all and end all of statements, after which there is nothing else. In this case, there is no such thing as the *Ṣaḥābi's* interpretation, as it is transmitted in the form of a direct statement and therefore only the occasion for its occurrence is thereby related. Because of this, the *Ṣaḥābah* had from the outset refused to involve them in giving explanations of mere opinion, and so that would be where they drew the line and they would not exceed those bounds. Importantly, the *Ṣaḥābah* witnessed the revelation, for example, in explaining the saying of Allāh: "*Until when death approaches one of you, Our messengers take his soul, and they never neglect their duty*" (*al-An'ām,* 6:61). Regarding this, Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "Meaning the Angel of Death and his assistants." Ibrāhīm narrated this on his authority(1) in a more concise version without making any extra elaborations by saying: "The Angel of Death's assistants."(2) This has been narrated by Qatādah, Mujāhid and Rabī'.(3)

- Whether the explanation is narrated by the *Ṣaḥābah* from the door of *Ijtihād* (independent judgment): This bears down upon the language, which the majority of them did not dispute as the *Ṣaḥābah* were people of articulation, clarity and understanding. For that very

(1) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (11410/); *Zād al-Masīr* (355/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (11410/).

(3) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2658/).

reason, Mujāhid relied on the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās over all others when faced with explaining the saying of Allāh: "*and has given you a place of residing and a place of storage.*" (*al-An'ām,* 6:98) Thus Ibn 'Abbās said: "*A place of residing*' is in the earth and '*a place of storage*' is with the Merciful."[1] Another narration on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās states that he said: "'*A place of residing*' is in the mother's womb and '*a place of storage*' is in the father's loins"[2]. Hence, Mujāhid agreed with the second narration about people and this was also the stance of Ibn Ḥibbān in explaining this Verse.[3]

- Whether the transmitted sayings contradict the *Ṣaḥābah*: In this respect, the *Tābi'īn* followed a course of considering the facts pertaining to the language, *Ḥadīth* or the saying of another *Ṣaḥābī* who combined the sayings. A case in point is the first explanation given for the saying of Allāh: "*Perform the prayers from the 'Dulūk' of the sun.*" (*al-Isrā',* 17:78) Ibn 'Abbās relates that '*Dulūk*' refers to sundown,[4] while it is also related that he said it refers to midday.[5] According to Ibn Mas'ūd, it refers to sundown[6] and he also said it refers to noon.[7] In this case, Qatādah chose

(1) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2658/).

(2) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (11570/); *Zād al-Masīr* (392/).

(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (15134/).

(4) *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (3254/).

(5) *Zād al-Masīr* (572/).

(6) *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (3254/).

(7) *Zād al-Masīr* (572/).

to interpret *'Dulūk'* to mean noon,[(1)] even though Ibn Mas'ūd also alluded to sundown.[(2)] Perhaps the reason for his choice here was based on linguistic factors given that the word *'Dulūk'* implies slanting or tilting and might therefore suggest the *Ẓuhr* (Noon) prayer. 'Ibn Jarīr takes a difference of opinion to him and disputes the first interpretation[(3)] maybe due to considerations of a directly narrated tradition on the authority of Qatādah who related it from Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib who said: "The Companions of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) differed over the middle prayer" and he clasped his fingers together to illustrate this.[(4)] Al-Ḥasan considered this to refer to the *'Aṣr* (Afternoon) prayer[(5)] and in doing so followed a number of the *Ṣaḥābah* (may Allāh be pleased with them). This interpretation was arrived at by Al-Ḥasan based on the narration he directly related from Samrah that the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The middle prayer is the *'Aṣr* prayer."[(6)]

One saying of a *Ṣaḥābī* might thereby be given consideration over that of another on account of its level of specificity concerning the *Ayah*. By way of example are their

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Zād al-Masīr* (572/).
(3) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (15137 ,136/).
(4) *Zād al-Masīr* (1282/).
(5) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2661/).
(6) *Tafsīr* aṭ-Ṭabarī (5194/) no. 5438.

interpretations of Allāh's saying: "*Verily, We have granted you 'al-Kawthar'*" (*al-Kawthar,* 108:1). A number of the *Ṣaḥābah* interpreted *'al-Kawthar'* as a river in *al-Jannah* (Paradise),(1) while Ibn 'Abbās held the view that it refers to the abundant good granted by Allāh.(2) The latter view was subsequently adopted by Sa'īd bin Jubayr, regarding which Abū Bashr said to Sa'īd: "We have heard that a river in *al-Jannah* is among the good things granted by Allāh."(3) Here, Ibn Jubayr opted for a more general interpretation by dismissing the specific designation of a river in Paradise and instead relied on the saying of Ibn 'Abbās whose interpretation was more general.

In the event that there are no narrations that can be ascribed to the *Ṣaḥābah,* the next measure is to take recourse to the practice of *Ijtiḥād* (independent judgment).(4) The interpretative outcome and the traditions related to them on the authority of the *Ṣaḥābah* entail the knowledge of the *Ṣaḥābah,* the precise facts of their conditions, the distinction between them, the observance of their methods and the benefits of them, and the make-up of their statements.(5)

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(1) *Zād al-Masīr* (9248/).

(2) *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr* [The Scattered Pearls: Intertextual Exegesis] by as-Suyūti (8649/).

(3) *Zād al-Masīr* (9248/).

(4) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2661/).

(5) *Ibid* (2677-672/).

4. The Arabic Language:

The *Tābi'īn* varied in the strategy of how they depended on language as one of the sources of *Tafsīr* owing to other reasons, such as their knowledge of the Arabic language, knowledge of the Arab's customs and experiences, their familiarity with Arabic poetry, their knowledge of linguistics and morphology, and so forth.(1)

5. Ijtihād (Independent Judgment):

The independent judgments of the *Tābi'īn* emerged in the science of *Tafsīr*, and even at the time of the *Ṣaḥābah*, that extended to cover a wide array of subjects, particularly those which the *Ṣaḥābah* said nothing about. Some of the instances in which they resorted to *Ijtihād* included:

- Explaining the intended meaning of the text in cases where the meaning is concealed due to the brevity of its words or its composition.
- Deducing rulings from Qur'ānic texts
- Showing the difference between similar words, meanings and interpretations
- Paying meticulous attention to exceed in knowledge of the Grand Book, such as revisiting its verses, words and so on (2)

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(1) *Ibid* (2707-689/).

(2) *Tafsīr at-Tābi'īn* [The Interpretation of Second and Third Generation Followers] (2711/).

The distinctive qualities of the *Ijtihād* practiced by the *Tābi'īn* in interpreting the verses of the Qur'ān were:

- Varied and diverse terms and expressions relating to *Ijtihād*
- Circumspect brevity
- Depth of contemplation and preciseness of interpretation
- The power of deduction

The Efforts of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Tābi'īn in Serving the Sunnah:

Initially, the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prohibited the writing down of anything other than the Qur'ān for fear that it would get mixed up with it, in addition to contributing to the people's preoccupation with other than the Book of their Lord. Afterwards, Prophetic permission was granted in favour of writing things down and the categorical recording of the noble *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic sayings) that thereby superseded the former prohibition and made it permissible.(1) Accordingly, it has been verified that many of the *Ṣaḥābah* permitted the recording of *Aḥadīth* and that they wrote them down themselves, as did their students who continued the practice of writing down and preserving the *Ḥadīth* after them.(2) In this fashion, experts of knowledge and committed Muslims began to exert scrupulous effort to

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 74.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 75.

record and preserve the unadulterated *Sunnah* by collecting the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* and ensuring that it remaining free from contamination.

Towards this end, those sincere individuals put in their hearts and souls, as well as their time, to embark on a quest for knowledge even if that meant staying up throughout the night and travelling across the earth throughout the day until the fruits of their blessed efforts were generated in the form of these magnificent collections of recordings that we have available to us today. Having made copies of their works, Muslims were able to read the recordings, memorize them and apply them by the complete Grace and Favour of Allāh. For them, there is no reward greater the reward that they will receive from Allāh on the Day of Judgment, if Allāh wills.[1]

The beginnings of official recording of the Prophetic *Hadith* as part of the responsibility of the Islāmic State might very well have been undertaken by the person of 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Marwān, 'Umar's father, at the time when he was the Governor of Egypt as we mentioned earlier. Still, the efforts that brought forth real fruits were those of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, which came into view through the instructions he issued to write down knowledge and record the *Ḥadīth*. In one of his instructions, he proclaimed: "People! Bind knowledge with gratitude and bind knowledge with writing (it down)."[2] Then again, it was not sufficient for 'Umar to only issue a

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*, p. 76.

vague instruction to preserve knowledge by writing it down but rather he endeavored – as the Caliph of the Muslims – to order some of the leading scholars of the *Ummah* to gather together the *Sunan* (traditions) and *Aḥadīth* (narrations) of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which he was brought to do based on what he saw from many of the *Tābi'īn* who permitted the writing down of the *Ḥadīth*.

Given that the *Tābi'īn* retained such extensive knowledge, growing concern arose that some of the memorisers might keep the knowledge to themselves, verification of *Ḥadīth* decreased and falsehood and fabrication was being mistaken for the genuine truth. The need to write down and document the *Ḥadīth* had become very apparent. 'Umar viewed written documentation as the best means of preserving the speech of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Another factor for concern was the prevalent doctrinal and political differences, about which az-Zuhri says: "If the *Aḥadīth* had not come to us from the East, we would have denied their authenticity for not having known their validity and I would neither have written them down nor permitted their recording."(1) Az-Zuhri's view on this was shared by many of the *Imams* of that period who feared the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* would get lost and mixed with lies and fabrications, and it was exactly that which prompted the scholars to preserve the *Sunnah* by writing it down. Moreover, it was the initiative

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 77.

of the highest authority, namely, the devout caliph, scholar, *Mujtahid,* the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, to take the decisive step of writing down the *Sunan* (traditions) of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by making it a responsibility of the State to preserve the pure *Sunnah.*(1) Below are some of the measures he took in this direction:

1. He wrote to the standing Governor of al-Madīnah to inform his contemporaries:

'Umar wrote to the then Govemor of al-Madīnah, Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, who 'Umar had appointed to the office of Justice, commanding him to do just that. An authentic narration in al-Bukhārī states that 'Umar wrote: "Seek out the knowledge of *Ḥadīth* and get it written, as I am afraid that religious knowledge will vanish and the religious learned men will pass away. Do not accept anything save the *Aḥadīth* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Circulate knowledge and teach the ignorant, for knowledge does not vanish except when it is kept secretly (to oneself)."(2) Ibn Sa'ad narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Dīnār: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to Abī Bakr bin Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm saying: 'Seek out the *Ḥadīth* of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a past *Sunnah* or a saying of 'Umrah bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān and write it down, as

(1) *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* [The Principles of Prophetic Narration] by Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb, p. 176186-.

(2) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (1195-194/).

I am fearful for the study of knowledge and the demise of its people."[1]

2. He wrote to the "Imām of Proof", Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī, regarding this matter:

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr mentioned that Ibn Shihāb said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered us to collect the *Ḥadīth* and so we sent notification to every land to endorse the order."[2] Abū 'Ubayd narrated that 'Umar ordered Ibn Shihāb to write down the *Sunnah* and Ibn Shihāb acceded to his order, upon which he wrote a long letter to 'Umar detailing how he was going to do that.[3] On this point, Ibn Ḥajr says: "The first person to record the *Ḥadīth* was Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī at the turn of the century under the orders of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Thereafter, others got into the practice of writing them down and they were categorized next. In doing this, he rendered a great amount of good, for which all praise is due to Allāh."[4]

3. 'Umar aimed his directives at all the people of al-Madīnah:

'Umar urged and encouraged the people of al-Madīnah to undertake the collection of *Ḥadīth* and for all who possessed knowledge to contribute towards its preservation. In the event

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes], pp. 1779-.

(2) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* (12-91/).

(3) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance], pp. 2312-.

(4) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (1208/); *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* [The Principles of Prophetic Narration] by Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb, pp. 178180-.

that only a few *Aḥadīth* had been received, 'Umar would write to the people of al-Madīnah, saying: "Seek out the *Ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and write them down, as I fear the disappearance of knowledge and the demise of its bearers."(1)

4. 'Umar did not stop there; he transmitted orders to all countries:

'Umar wrote to all countries of the Islāmic State to instruct every scholar to undertake the task of collecting and documenting the *Ḥadīth* that he knew from the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or from his honourable *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions).(2) It is reported that he said: "Seek out the *Ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), collect them and write them down, as I fear the disappearance of knowledge and the demise of scholars."(3)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had been interested in the Arabic language and encouraged the citizens of foreign lands within the empire to learn it and become proficient in it. He therefore offered incentives in the form of grants and gifts in abundance to those who did, while he penalized those who did not become fluent in Arabic by deducting their stipends. The reason for his emphasis on the importance of Arabic was

(1) *Sunan ad-Dārimi* (1137/).

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 79.

(3) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [Grant of the Creator] (1195/); *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* [The Principles of Prophetic Narration] by Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb, p. 178.

for the purpose of understanding the Book of Allāh and the noble *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[1]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Method and Practice of Documentation:

Regarding the codification of *Ḥadīth,* 'Umar abided by a strictly defined and measured method made up of precise conditions and useful and purposeful stipulations. This was evident in four respects:

- His good choice of executors:

Abū Bakr bin Ḥazm was a repository of knowledge and one of the stars of his time, about whom Imām Mālik said: "I never saw anyone with greater chivalry or of higher ranking than Ibn Ḥazm. I have never seen any accomplish was he has accomplished: governorship of al-Madīnah, the office of Justice and chief of the *Ḥajj* season." And he said: "He was an honest man who transmitted many *Ḥadīth*." Ibn Sa'ad said: "He was a reliable scholar, transmitted many *Ḥadīth* and died in 120 AH."[2] As for az-Zuhri, he was an eminent scholar, the preserver of his time and his reputation stretched to all horizons." Al-Layth bin Sa'ad said: "I never saw a single scholar whose ability to retain knowledge could

(1) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by as-Sharqāwī, p. 178.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (54-313/).

compare to Ibn Shihāb. He would speak about reward and punishment and we would say: 'There is nothing better than this'. And whenever he spoke about the Arabs and ancestry, I would say: 'There is nothing better than this'. If he spoke about the Qur'ān and *Sunnah,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would say: 'Take knowledge from Ibn Shihāb, for you will not find anyone who knows about a previous *Sunnah* than him."[1]

- He demanded those who documented the Sunnah to categorically collect the Aḥadīth and codify them:

Special people were designated to document particular *Aḥadīth* owing to their levels of importance. For example, Ibn Ḥazm was ordered to document the *Ḥadīth* of 'Amrah bint 'Abd ar-Raḥmān because she was considered among the most trusted of people to *Umm al-Mu'minīn* (Mother of the Believers), 'Āishah, and 'Ā'ishah was undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable people on the private affairs and dealings of our master, the Messenger of Allāh, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) with his family and inside his home.[2]

With regards to the person of 'Amrah, she was the daughter of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Sa'ad bin Zurārah, the Anṣāriyyah

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5328/); *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 80.

(2) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 81.

(one of the Helpers of al-Madīnah), from Najjār and al-Madīnah, and she was a jurist who studied under 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her). Her grandfather, Sa'ad, was an elderly *Ṣaḥābī* and the brother of the high chief, As'ad bin Zurārah. Ibn Madīnī attested to her high position by stating: "'Amrah was one of the reliable scholars who would verify knowledge."[1] Az-Zuhri says: "I went to her and found that she had a depth of knowledge that had not been exhausted."[2] She died in 98 AH, or 106 AH.[3]

On account relates that 'Umar ordered Ibn Ḥazm to collect and document the sayings of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, which is what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz meant when he vowed to emulate *'al-Farūq'* (the Distinguisher of Truth from Falsehood"; an epithet of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb) in his manner of judgment, his policy on charity and in writing to his officials. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz also commissioned Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar to do the same, i.e. compile 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb's biography. All of this testifies to 'Umar's clear ambition and mission to imitate his grandfather (may Allāh be pleased with them).[4] He therefore wrote to family of 'Amr bin Ḥazm to reproduce the document of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on charity in order to conduct the same practice throughout the course of his own caliphate and thereby settle

(1) *Ibid; Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* [Refinement of the Discipline] by Ibn Hajr (12466/).

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4508/); *Nisā lahā Tārīkh* [Women with a History], p. 155.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4508/).

(4) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 81.

the affairs of his people.(1)

- He obligated documenters of the *Sunnah* to discern the genuine narrations from the fabricated ones:

He enquired into the authenticity of *Ḥadīth*, which is evident from ad-Dārimi's narration in which 'Umar says to Ibn Ḥazm: "Write to me concerning the *Ḥadīth* you verify as on the authority of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as the *Ḥadīth* of 'Umar." According to Imām Aḥmad in *al-'Illal* [Hidden Flaws], Umar said: "Write to me concerning the *Ḥadīth* that you verify as on the authority of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the *Ḥadīth* of 'Amrah."(2) Notably, this was a point of great importance to establishing a system of documentation on solid, verified and accurate grounds.(3)

- His verification of the authenticity of Ḥadīth:

'Umar was a senior scholar and was not of inferior knowledge to those he entrusted with documenting the *Ḥadīth*. He was therefore able to partake in discussing some of the narrations they had collected in addition to verifying them.(4) Abū az-Zinād 'Abdullah bin Dhakwān al-Qurashi said: "I saw

(1) *Ibid*.
(2) Extracted from *Muqaddimat al-Musnad*, p. 203-.
(3) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 82.
(4) *Ibid*, p.82.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz convene a meeting with the jurists who had collected together some of the *sunan.* If something came up that was not attributable to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), he would say: 'This is extra. It is not attributable to him'."[1]

- The fruit of this documentation:

These early, blessed efforts exerted by 'Umar and the scholars proved to reap their fruits, such as in the form of those collections compiled by Imām az-Zuhrī. Accordingly, 'Umar ordered that these collections be copied multiple times and then sent a copy to every country within the vast Islāmic State. Noticeably, many of the scholars collected the sayings they had heard for themselves for the purpose of their own revision whenever the need arose to perfect their memorization. As for the task of formal documentation that had been assumed by the State, the fruit of which prevailed across the major cities, this was done by the orders of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Of the good fruits brought forth was also that pertinent methodology of setting the foundations and establishing the necessary points that 'Umar had followed throughout the process of documentation. Furthermore, this methodology had an extensive core that integrated what came after it, all of which was a result of his astute understanding, copious knowledge, perceptiveness and good management that first and foremost achieved its success by the conciliation of Allāh.

(1) *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth,* p. 82.

That 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had directed Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq to collect the Qur'ān together, which he did, on account of which both proved to be great favours upon the *Ummah,* that was next compiled by 'Uthmān into one manuscript, one version and one style, specifically, in the dialect of the Quraysh, it might thereby be supposed that Allāh, Glorified is He, saved the great virtue and honour of collecting the *Sunnah* and codifying it for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who He made the protector of the second source of reference in Islāmic law (of course, we only assume this and are in no way suggesting this is what Allāh definitely did). Magnificent people like those who proved to be the greatest reformers were able to accomplish everything that they did by the conciliation of Allāh who made their inner selves sincere, facilitated them to the truth, showed them the right way, directed their steps and guided them in their affairs.[1]

The Libyan poet, Aḥmad Rafīq al-Mahdawī said:

"If Allāh loves the soul of His servant,
The gifts of the Giver are made to manifest to him;
And if the intention of a reformer is purified for Allāh,
Servants incline towards him with their souls."[2]

In truth, this formal documentation is regarded as one of the great achievements and successes realized during the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 83.

(2) *Ath-Thamār az-Zakiyyah lil-Ḥarakah as-Sinūsiyyah* [The Pure Fruits of the Senussi Moverment], p. 198.

mercy on him).[1]

- The efforts of the Tābi'īn in serving the noble Prophetic Sunnah:

The *Tābi'īn* carried on the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* from the *Ṣaḥābah* and additionally ensured that the *isnād* (chains of transmission) were regulated with absolute precision and proficiency. In this way, the science of reporting and recording *Ḥadīth* had become somewhat of a trusteeship upon their shoulders whereby they undoubtedly felt responsible for communicating and transmitting them to those who would come after them. This was especially true amidst the political and theological tumult that had emerged at the hands of heretics who were making pre claims to Islām. They made these pretentious claims on account of their antagonism towards the religion and state because of tribal, linguistic and racial fanaticism, because of the financial gains they could reap by narrating and preaching, and because of the ignorance of some worshippers and ascetics among many other reasons. The result of all of these things was that lies began to surface in the *Ḥadīth*, which is why those bearers of the authentic *Ḥadīth* felt it was their patent duty to deal with the liars and deviant fabricators. The remarkable extent of their efforts and services rendered is certainly deserving of a great deal of credit and appreciation. It is possible to summarise their efforts according to the following:

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 83.

- Commitment to the Isnād (Chains of Narration):

Ibn Sirīn said: "They never used to enquire about the chains of narration but then when the *Fitnah* (discord; tribulation) broke out, they said: 'Name us your antecedents, those who belonged to the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Tradition), their *Ḥadīth* are accepted and those who are innovators, their *Ḥadīth* are rejected."[(1)]

It is narrated that 'Utbah bin Abī al-Ḥakm went to see Isḥāq bin Abī Farwah who was with az-Zuhri at the time and as Ibn Abī Farwah began to say: "The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)...", az-Zuhri interrupted him by saying: "May Allāh damn you for your audacity against Allāh by not relating the *isnad* to your *Ḥadīth*! Will you narrate *Ḥadīth* to us without any reign or muzzle?"[(2)]

- Engaging in intellectual circles of knowledge:

Ibn Sirīn said: "I arrived in al-Kūfah and ash-Sha'bi had a great circle of knowledge. In those days, there were many *Ṣaḥābah.*"[(3)] Ibn Shihāb is reported to have said: "Sa'īd bin Jubayr would narrate to us twice every day: after *Fajr* (dawn

(1) Muslim (115/).

(2) *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* [Knowledge of the Sciences of Prophetic Narration] by al-Ḥākim, p. 6.

(3) *Tārīkh al-Islām* [The History of Islām], p. 126.

prayer) and after *'aṣr* (afternoon prayer)."[1]

- Observance of transmitting Ḥadīth as they heard it:

In other words, they delivered the *Ḥadīth* word for word and if that was not possible then they would narrate the meaning of it in keeping with fixed standards and regulations.[2] Ibn 'Awn reportedly said: "Ibrāhīm, ash-Sha'bi and Al-Ḥasan would convey the meanings of *hadith* while al-Qāsim, Ibn Sirīn and Rajā' would repeat the *Ḥadīth* word for word."[3] Layth bin Abī Sulaym said: "Ṭāwūs would transmit the *Ḥadīth* word for word."[4]

- The development of scientific criteria for praising and criticizing the condition of narrators:

- **Comparing the narrations of narrators against each other**: As Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri said: "If 'Amrah narrated a *Ḥadīth* to me and then 'Urwah narrated it, I would have to discern which of the narrations to believe. Upon studying them both thoroughly, I concluded 'Urwah was an inexhaustible sea (of knowledge)."

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(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4336/).

(2) *At-Tābi'ūn wa Juhūdihim fī Khidmat al-Ḥadīth* [The Tabi'ūn and their Efforts in Serving the Prophetic Narrations], p. 58.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4559/).

(4) *Ibid* (5465/).

- **Comparing the *Hadith* of the narrator with the *Ḥadīth* itself taken from separate instances:** It is reported that Hishām bin 'Abd *al-Mālik* wanted to verify az-Zuhri's memorization and so he tested him by asking him to dictate to some of his children. Thus he called for a book to be brought and he dictated four hundred *Ḥadīth* to him. After a month or so had passed, Hishām said to him: "O Abī Bakr! Indeed, that book got lost." He then asked him to dictate the book back to him and he found that he did not depart from a single word in error.(1)
- **Amending the chains of narration and the subject matter:**
- Ḥammād bin Salamah said: "I was listening to some narrators who had not memorized the *Ḥadīth* and I was amending them in order to put them right."(2)
- **Distinguishing innovations by the contradiction of *Sunnah* with the** Qur'ān:
- Abī Qalābah said: "If a man spoke about the *Sunnah* it would be said: 'Enough of this' and the Book of Allāh would be brought, upon which I knew that he was deviant."(3)
- **The necessity of memorizing the** Qur'ān **before engaging with the *Sunnah*:**

(1) *A-Sunnah wa Makānatihā fī at-Tashrī'* [The Prophetic Example and its Place in Islāmic Legislating], p. 209.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5222/).

(3) *Ibid* (4724/).

- Ḥafṣ bin Ghiyāth said: "I went to al-A'mash and said: 'Narrate *Ḥadīth* to me'. So he said: 'Have you memorized the Qur'ān?' I said: 'No'. He said: 'Go and memorize it, then come to me and I will narrate *Ḥadīth* to you'. So I went and memorized the Qur'ān, after which I went to him and asked him to listen to my recitation. I therefore recited to him and then he narrated *Ḥadīth* to me'."

- Responding to requests for formal legal opinion and judging between people:

The *Tābi'īn* further assumed the role of delivering requests for formal legal opinion and judging between the people, which is why Imāms such as Ibrāhīm and ash-Sha'bi agreed to do with 'Alqamah bin Qays an-Nakh'ī on the issue of leadership after 'Alī. 'Alqamah who was known as one of the most erudite pupils of Ibn Mas'ūd whose footsteps he followed in praying and conduct, and in practicing Islām as a whole. Those near him would say: "Come and let us go to the one who resembles Ibn Mas'ūd the most in conduct and attitudes." They would thereupon ask him questions, take legal rulings from him and this was at a time when the *Ṣaḥābah* were many.[1] Abī az-Zinād is reported to have said: "There were seven jurists who would be requested for legal opinions in al-Madīnah" and he finished his statement by saying: "Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, Abū Bakr bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, 'Urwah, al-Qāsim, 'Ubaydullah bin 'Abdullah, Khārijah bin Zayd and Sulaymān bin Yassār."[2]

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(1) *Al-Muḥaddith al-Fāḍil* [The Virtuous Transmitter of Prophetic Narrations], p. 203.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4438/).

There is no doubt that responding to requests for legal opinion and judging between the people were not carried out with ease, mildness and even sleep but demanded effort, time and expenses in order to arrange, prepare and then deliver.(1)

- Determining the condition of narrators to know whose *Ḥadīth* should be sought and whose should not:

The *Tābi'ūn* would additionally offer their services to the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* by undertaking the task of determining the condition of narrators to know whose *Ḥadīth* should be sought and whose should not.(2)

Muḥammad bin Sirīn is reported to have said: "I met the people of al-Kūfah and they held five people in high esteem: whoever gave first preference to al-Ḥārith al-A'war ranked 'Ubaydah as-Salmānī second and whoever gave first preference to 'Ubaydah as-Salmānī ranked to al-Ḥārith al-A'war second, then 'Alqamah, then Masrūq and then Shurayḥ."(3)

Qatādah is reported to have said: "If four people convened with me I would not turn my attention to other than them and I would not concern myself with disputing them. These were the imams of the major cities: Al-Ḥasan, Ibn al-Musayyib, Ibrāhīm and 'Aṭā'."(4)

(1) *At-Tābi'ūn wa Juhūdihim fī Khidmat al-Ḥadīth* [The Tabi'ūn and their Efforts in Serving the Prophetic Narrations], p. 64.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (491/).

(4) *Ibid* (583/).

Such were the most valuable and consequential efforts exerted in the service of the Prophetic *Ḥadīth*. More information can be obtained on this topic in the work of Dr Muḥammad 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb entitled: *At-Tābi'ūn wa Juhūduhum fī Khidmat al-Ḥadīth an-Nabawī* [The *Tābi'ūn* and the Efforts They Exerted in Serving the Prophetic Narrations].

A Case Study: The Tābi'īn Method of Purification and Conduct at the School of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī *during the Reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Umayyad State:*

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was a contemporary of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and is regarded as a particularly influential person to the political and social life of the Umayyad State. His name was Abū Sa'īd Al-Ḥasan bin Yasār, the freedman of Zayd bin Thābit (may Allāh be pleased with him), a senior *Tābi'ī*, the Imām of the people of al-Baṣrah and the scholar of his time. His mother was called Khayrah and she was slave of *Umm al-Mu'minīn,* Umm Salamah (may Allāh be pleased with her). He was born in 21 AH in al-Madīnah during the caliphate of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with them). Al-Ḥasan was reportedly nursed by Umm Salamah (may Allāh be pleased with her) when his mother, Khayrah, went out to purchase goods for the house. It is said that Al-Ḥasan who was only a young child started crying and so Umm Salamah picked him up and put him to her breast to see if he would

latch on. When he did, she suckled him and her milk began flow in abundance, because of which Umm Salamah became his mother through suckling. Consequently, his eloquence and knowledge were clearly blessings from being nurtured in the houses of the *Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn* wherein he was brought up with their children and acquired their manners and etiquettes, in addition to having studied under senior *Ṣaḥābah* in the *masjid* (mosque) of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), such as Abū Mūsā al-'Ash'arī, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Jābir bin 'Abdullah (may Allāh be pleased with them all).

Al-Ḥasan later moved with his parents to al-Baṣrah, which is why he would later acquire the name Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, meaning Al-Ḥasan of Basra. At that time, he was ten years of age but irrespective of that he would stay in the *masjid* of al-Baṣrah to learn from its prominent scholars wherein he would especially attend the circles of the "Ink of the *Ummah*", 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them). It was not long before the people started to surround him and approach him from every direction to find that what was said about him was true to the way he was, neither would he say something and not do it such that his inner-self matched his outward actions. If he enjoined good the people would apply it and if he forbade evil they would stop it. He was an ascetic and was known for his condemnation of worldliness, yet the

people had a great thirst for what he had to offer.[1]

The Reasons for His Impression on People's Hearts:

Allāh combined all the good qualities and virtues that are needed to appeal to the hearts of people in the person of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī through whom He raised the value of the Religion and its followers within society. He was comprehensively erudite in the sciences of *tafsīr* (exegesis) and *Ḥadīth* (prophetic narrations) and it was such that at that particular time, nobody spread the call to Islām or carried out reforms unless he or she possessed copious knowledge in these two field. Furthermore, he was acquainted with the *Ṣaḥābah* and a peer of many of them. From his life and sermons, it is clear that he studied deeply, excelled spiritually and knew exactly how to develop the Islāmic society. His paid close attention to all the social classes, customs and practices, as well as their ills and remedies with the same level of knowledge and expertise as a physician curing the sick.[2]

With regard to the extent of his eloquence and the sweetness of his pronunciation in influencing his listeners, Abū 'Amr bin al-'Alā' said: "I never saw anyone more eloquent than Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and al-Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf, while Al-Ḥasan was the most eloquent of the two."[3] He was a symbol

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4588-563/); *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Life of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī] by Dr Rawḍah al-Ḥaḍrī.

(2) *Rijāl al-Fikrah wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thought and Preaching] (167/).

(3) *Naẓarāt fī Tawassuf al-Islāmī* [Islāmic Perspectives on Mysticism] by Dr

of vast knowledge and amassed information, as ar-Rabī' bin Anas said: "Al-Ḥasan was a first class compiler, scholar and jurist of sound reliability. He was a devout worshipper, articulate in his speech and particularly handsome." Upon arriving in Makkah, he sat down on a cushion and immediately the people flocked around him and said: "We have never seen anyone like this (man)." According to Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī, Thābit bin Qurrah described him by saying: "He is a descendent of the stars in knowledge and *taqwā* (piety), asceticism and saintliness, abstinence and delicacy, and knowledge and understanding. His gatherings attract all types of people. Some take *Ḥadīth* from him, others want to acquire knowledge of *tafsīr*, another listens to the *ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* (lawful and unlawful injunctions), some request legal opinions, another wants to learn about ruling and judgment, someone else wants to hear him sermonise, and so on. Whatever their interests might be, he is like an impelling, mighty sea or like a luminescent, dazzling beacon whose stance and attestation to enjoining good and forbidding evil to the officials and high-ranking figures with such vividness and expression cannot be forgotten."(1)

He was in fact superior to all of that and it was this superiority that was the secret behind his impact on people's hearts, his charm of others and their yielding to him. He possessed great passion and a fiery soul. He showed the greatest sincerity and he spoke from the heart to the heart. Whenever he spoke

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Muḥammd al-Qahwījī, p. 221.

(1) *Rijāl al-Fikrah wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thought and Preaching] (168/).

about the *Ṣaḥābah* or described the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), eyes would overflow with tears and hearts would be moved.[1] Ma⍰r al-Warāq said: "Whenever al-Ḥasān appeared, it was as if he were in the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) and informing us of what he was in view of with his own eyes."[2] 'Awf said: "I never saw a man who knew more about the way leading to *Jannah* (Paradise) that Al-Ḥasan."[3] He would relish in *Īmān* (Faith) and talk about sentiment and passion, because of which his circles in al-Baṣrah were the most popular and because he attracted the people to him with magnetic force as all sincere people have been known to do in any time.

The thing that distinguished him the most was his speech for resembling the speech of the prophets to the people when they heard it. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* [Revival of the Sciences of Religion], al-Ghazāli says: "Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was most similar in speech to the speech of the prophets (upon them prayers and peace) and closest in guidance to the *Ṣaḥābah* (may Allāh be pleased with them). There is no dispute on this point regarding him."[4] The outcome of his great virtues and many superior qualities was that he had a strong, charismatic and captivating personality in the eyes of the people who would be enchanted by his magic and awestruck by his greatness. Even Thābit bin Qurrah al-Ḥakīm al-Ḥarrāni said: "Al-Ḥasan is certainly one

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4573/).

(3) *Ibid* (4575/).

(4) *Rijāl al-Fikrah wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thought and Preaching] (168/).

of those people who the community can boast about and be proud about in front of other communities."[1] The greatest factors for his monumental impact on society and swaying of hearts and minds was that he struck a sentimental chord, touched the depths of society, identified its ills, criticised it constructively and wisely, and advised it lovingly at a time when it was choked by preachers and sermonisers. Irrespective of this, none of those preachers were able to make an impression on society like that of Al-Ḥasan because he was siincere, down to earth and he went against the grain through his disdain for the world and its temptations that had spread illnesses in life. He would remember death and summon the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter), whereas those who lived in luxury would conveniently forget those things and justify it to themselves using lies and fancy dreams, yet they would get annoyed at those who troubled them and criticised their lifestyles. For this reason, he was always struggling against ignorance, while ignorance does not surrender except to the one who struggles against it and it is not acknowledged except by the presence of the man who wages war against it; Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was that man. He was thereby able to increase the number of repentant people in society and pull them away from disobedience and the life of ignorance that they were leading. In doing so, he galvanised a powerful and effective wave of reform because he did not hold back in the sermons and speeches he delivered; on the contrary, he targeted everyone he came into contact with. To sum up, he

(1) *Ibid.*

amalgamated preaching and direction, intellectual teaching and spiritual, moral purification through which he was able to guide countless individuals, that only Allāh can know the number of, to taste the sweetness of faith and the experience the truth of Islām.[1]

A Glimpse at the Prophetic 'Taṣawwuf' ('Mysticism') of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī:

Al-Ḥasan al- Ba?rī is ranked among the scholars of exceptional demeanor as one who paid special attention to the ills and remedies of the soul, and revived hearts and penetrated them with faith and Godly principles. He was of sound *'aqīdah* (doctrine of faith) (may Allāh have mercy on him) and bound to the Book and *Sunnah* in his teachings, while there is no doubt that the basis of prophetic *taṣawwuf* is abidance by the Book and *Sunnah* according to the way of the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) in creed, worship, conduct and dealings. We will be able to see that through our study of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and the issues he concerned himself with (may Allāh have mercy on him).

- Hardening of the Heart, its Life and Lifelessness:

A man said to Al-Ḥasan: "O Abī Sa'īd! I complain to you of the hardness of my heart." He responded: "Immerse it in

(1) *Ibid* (175/).

remembrance (of Allāh)."(1) And he said: "Verily, hearts die and come to life, so if it dies, charge it with carrying out the *Farā'iḍ* (compulsory duties) and if it comes to life, follow it voluntarily."(2) The Majestic Lord condemns a hard heart, saying: "*Then after that your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness.*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:74) "Worse than that" is then illustrated through the metaphor: "*And indeed, there are stones out of which rivers gush forth, and indeed, there are of them (stones) which split asunder so that water flows from them, and indeed, there are of them (stones) which fall down for fear of Allāh*" (*Ibid*). The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Do not speak much without remembering Allāh, for talking much without remembering Allāh is (a cause for) the hardening of the heart. And indeed, the person most distant from Allāh is one with a hardened heart."(3)

In relation to what causes the hardening of the heart, there are many causes. Speaking much without remembering Allāh breaches the covenant with Allāh, as Allāh says: "*So, because of the breach of their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts grow hard.*" (*al-Mā'idah,* 5:13). Too much laughter is also a cause, as is eating too much, especially the eating of *Ḥarām* (prohibited) things, excessive sinning,(4) and so on.

(1) *Az-Zuhd lil-*Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 123.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 124.
(3) *Sunan at-Tirmidhī,* no. 2411.
(4) *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Ḥāfiẓ bin Rajab* [A Collection of al-Ḥafīz bin Rajab's Treatise] (1262 ,261/).

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī mentioned many of its causes in his edicts. As for the things that remove hardness from the heart, these are numerous:

Immersing the heart and tongue in much remembrance of Allāh:

Allāh says: "*Allāh has sent down the Best Statement, a Book (this* Qur'ān*), and its parts resembling each other (in goodness and truth) (and) oft-repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it (when they recite it or hear it). Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allāh*" (*az-Zumar,* 39:23) The Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "These hearts will be corroded like iron so you should polish them by asking for forgiveness." When it was asked how to banish this corrosion, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "By reciting the Book of Allāh and remembering Him much."(1)

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) would say: "People! I exhort you, and it does not mean that I am the best person among you, not even the most righteous among you, for I have exceeded the limits on many occasions, failed to apply them and not carried out a duty in obedience to Allāh myself. However, if a believer were not to advice his brother except after he had decided to do it himself, there

(1) *Al-Bayhaqi fī as-Sha'ab,* no. 142; *al-'Ilal al-Mutanāhiyyah* [Terminal Illnesses] by Ibn al-Jawzi (2832/).

would be very few preachers and exhorters and nobody to call to Allāh, promote praising and obeying Him and condemn disobeying Him. On the contrary, staying in the company of people of insight and discussion among believers gives life to hearts, reminds them of heedlessness and saves them from forgetfulness. Allāh may cure you by sticking to circles of remembrance, for 'Lord' is a word that is heard and not overlooked. Fear Allāh as he should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (Submitters to the Will of Allāh)."[1]

He would say: "Glorified is He Who causes the hearts of the conscious to taste the sweetness and delight of showing devotion to and serving Him. It is to Him that they affix their cares and anxieties through His remembrance and with Him above all others do they preoccupy their hearts. Nothing is more pleasant to them than secret conversation with Him and nothing delights them more than serving Him. Their tongues are not scared to mention Him, the Sublime, in the face of what the *Ẓālimūn* (wrongdoers) say."[2]

He would also say: "You can lose sweetness in three things: prayer, recitation and remembrance. I have found that to be the case and so I warn and preach to you only so that you may know of your closed door and consequently treat and open it."[3] The best form of remembrance is through recitation of the Qur'ān, as Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī would say:

(1) *Az-Zuhd lil-*Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 79.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Ibid.*

"Whoever wants to know where he stands, let him scrutinize his actions in light of the Qur'ān in order to discern his losses from his gains."(1) He also said: "A servant lays himself open to the Book of Allāh and if he (his affairs) is in agreement with it, he praises Allāh and asks Him to improve him, and if he is in disagreement with it, he blames himself and take recourse right away."(2) He would say: "O people! Verily, this Qur'ān is a cure for the believers and a leader for the devout. Whomsoever Allāh guides through it is truly guided and whoever deters from it has been forsaken and afflicted."(3)

He also said: "Reciters of the Qur'ān are of three types: A man who recites the Qur'ān and takes it as if a thing for sale and seeks to impress patrons and gain power over the people. Then there is the man who recites the Qur'ān and learns its words by heart but forgets to act within the bounds of its laws…and may Allāh not make these types of bearers of the Qur'ān proliferate. Then there is the man who recites the Qur'ān and cures his ailing heart with the Qur'ān's antidote. He remains awake at night with it and goes thirsty during his days to be with it and stands up with it in his place of prayer and leaves his bed to be with it. It is because of them that Almighty Allāh will restrain the calamity and grant victory over the enemy, and grant blessed rain over the heavens. I swear by Allāh that these among the reciters of the Qur'ān are rarer

(1) *Ibid*, p. 142.
(2) *Ibid*.
(3) *Ibid*, p 147.

than red sulphur."[1] On the subject of praying at night, he would say: "If you are not able to stand in prayer at night or fast during the day then know that you are deprived and that you have been shackled to your sins and errors."[2] A man said to him: "O Abī Sa'īd! Standing in prayer at night exhausts me and I do not have the energy for it." So he replied: "O son of my brother! Repent to Allāh and ask His forgiveness, for verily, that is a bad sign."[3] And he said: "Certainly, the man who commits a sin is denied the night prayer."[4]

Profuse Remembrance of Death:

The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Increase in remembrance of the severer of pleasures (i.e. death)."[5] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: "Death has exposed the reality of this life and has left no chance for the wise person to delight in it."[6] Sālim bin Rasm is reported to have said: "I heard Al-Ḥasan say: 'May Allāh have mercy on the man who was not deceived by what he saw from many people. Son of Ādam! Verily, you shall die alone, enter the grave alone, be summoned alone and judged alone. Son of Ādam! That is what is intended for you."[7] And Al-Ḥasan said: "No servant remembers death more than the one who sees

(1) *Ibid*, p. 148.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 146.
(3) *Ibid*.
(4) *Ibid*.
(5) *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, no. 2307; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, no. 4258.
(6) *Az-Zuhd lil*-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 20.
(7) *Ibid*, p. 21.

it in his work and a servant does not have long-term hope except that it spoils his work."[1]

It is said that Al-Ḥasan saw an old man at a funeral and once the body had been buried, Al-Ḥasan said to him: "O *Shaykh* (old man)! I want to ask you about your Lord. Do you think that this dead person wants to return to the world to increase his good deeds and seek Allāh's forgiveness for his previous sins?" The man answered: "O Allāh, yes!" So Al-Ḥasan said: "Then why is it that we are not like this dead man?" He then left while saying: "What is an admonition? What use is it whilst the hearts have life? Yet there is no life for the one who is screaming."[2] And he said: "I am astonished by those people who are ordered to prepare their provisions, then the start of the journey is announced, yet they remain unmindful in their vain discussions and fruitless deeds."[3] And he would say: "Servants of Allāh! Indeed, Allāh, the Sublime, did not make your deeds for a purpose other than death and you are required to be persistent, as Allāh says: "*And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (i.e. death).*" (*al-Ḥijr,* 15:99) And Al-Ḥasan would say: "Son of Ādam! Indeed, you shall die alone and be judged alone. Were all people to obey Allāh and you to disobey Him, their obedience would not benefit you, and were they to disobey Him and you to obey Him, their disobedience would not harm you. Son of Ādam! Your sins are your own and it is your flesh

(1) *Ibid*, p. 21.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 21.
(3) *Ibid*, p. 22.

and blood. Therefore if you are safe from your sins, your flesh and blood are safe, otherwise it shall be a Fire that does not extinguish, a body that does not perish and a self that does not die."[1] He would say: "Were it not for three things, the son of Ādam would not bow his head: death, illness and poverty."[2] Whenever Al-Ḥasan would recite the *Ayah* (verse): "*Verily, the Promise of Allāh is true, let not then this (worldly) present life deceive you, nor let the chief deceiver (Satan) deceive you about Allāh*" (*Luqmān,* 31:33), he would say: "Who said that?" Then he would say: "He Who created it and knows it best."[3] And Al-Ḥasan said: "Beware of the diversions of this world, which are many. If a man opens a door for diversions, then that door may open ten others."[4]

Visiting the Graves to Reflect on the State of its Inhabitants:

The Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Visit the graves to be mindful of death."[5] Another narration asserts: "I used to forbid you from visiting the graves; but now visit them, as they are a reminder of the *Ākhirah.*"[6] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī would visit the graves frequently and before her death, an-Nawār, the daughter of A'yan bin Ḍab'iyyah al-Majāsh'ī, the wife of al-

(1) *Ibid*, p. 23.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 24.
(3) *Ibid*, p. 25.
(4) *Ibid*, p. 26.
(5) *Muslim*, no. 976.
(6) *Muslim*

Farzadaq, she had requested that Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī offer the prayer at her funeral. Hence, the people of Baṣrah witnessed her body being carried with Al-Ḥasan who rode alongside it on his mule and al-Farzadaq who rode on his camel. During the procession, Al-Ḥasan said to al-Farzadaq: "What are the people saying?" He replied: "They are saying that the best of people has attended this funeral today, meaning you, and the worst of people, meaning me." So he said to him: "O Abī Firās! I am not the best of people and you are not the worst." Then Al-Ḥasan said: "What have you prepared for this day?" He said: The declaration that there is no one worthy of worship but Allāh for the past eighty years". After Al-Ḥasan had offered the prayer over al-Farzadaq's wife, the people drew close to her grave and al-Farzadaq began to recite in poetic verse:

"I fear what is beyond the tomb in case I am not forgiven
That is more flaming and narrower.
When a guide will come to me on the Day of Resurrection
Who is furious and seeks to steer and direct al-Farazdaq.
Verily, Adam's children will walk
Towards Hell fettered in chains
Guided to Hell dressed
In tattered and ragged garments
There they will drink pus and you will see them
Melting and engulfed by its heat."

Al-Ḥasan therefore cried so much that he wet his garment, after which he approached al-Farzadaq and said to him: "You had been one of the most disliked people to me and today you are one of the most beloved to me."(1) In this manner, Al-Ḥasan would draw lessons from the graves and contemplate on the states of the deceased. Awānah reported that Al-Ḥasan said: "Basr bin Marwān, the brother of Caliph 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān and the Governor of Egypt, who was one of the oldest elders, came to us and stayed with us for forty days. Soon after that, he died so we carried him out to his grave but on our way to al-Ḥabān, we encountered four black men carrying a friend of theirs to his grave. We then put Bashr on his bed and offered the prayer over him, while they were doing the same to their friend, after which we place Bashr in his grave and buried him, while they did the same to their friend. We then left and so did they. As I was leaving, however, I turned around to look at his grave and I could not tell Bashr's grave from the grave of the Abyssinian. I never saw anything more astonishing than that."(2)

The scholars list other things for removing hardness of the heart, such as kindness towards orphans and the needy, meditating on death and learning from the status of those who have passed away.(3)

(1) Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr. Muṣṭafā al-Khann, p. 345 extracted from Ibn Kathīr's *al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End], Book 7.

(2) *Al-Bayān wa at-Tabyīn* (3147/); Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Muṣṭafā al-Khann, p. 349.

(3) *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Ḥāfiẓ bin Rajab* [A Collection of al-?afīz bin Rajab's Treatise] (1270-264/).

His Insistence on Sincerity, Obedience to Allāh and Self-Reflection:

Sincerity:

Sincerity is the virtue of the one who speaks and act truly about his or her own feelings, thoughts, and desires. Accordingly, the heart of the sincere person is extended with strength that makes him or her rise up to the noble task of seeking Allāh's Pleasure, with no expectation of reward or thanks from others. The sincere person's breast is filled with clemency, forgiveness and excellent morals in compliance with Allāh's Decree and in seeking victory in the form of eternal bliss in the *Ākhirah*. If he or she gets angry, then his or her anger is for the sake of Allāh, and that similarly applies to all of his or her affairs. Allāh says: "*Say (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)): 'Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), (who was a)* Ḥanīfah *(i.e. believer in One God and true monotheism) and he was not of the 'Mushrikīn' ('Idolaters; Polytheists')*." (*al-An'ām,* 6: 162-3) Al-Ḥasan would say: "Whoever adorns for the people what Allāh has not informed him to do shall make him ugly"'.[1] And he reportedly said: "The most favourable asceticism is hidden

(1) *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Life of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī] by Rawḍah al-Ḥaṣrī, p. 170.

asceticism."[1]

It is said that Rajā' bin Ḥaywah was looked at a man who was sleepy after daybreak and so he said: "Take heed. May Allāh cure you from confusing prayer with sleep and therefore frustrating your work."[2] And Al-Ḥasan said: "It happened that a man passed by another man reciting: [*Verily, those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the Most Gracious (Allāh) will bestow love for them (in the hearts of the believers.]* (*Maryam,* 19:96) So the other man said to him: By Allāh! Worship Allāh in a manner that is remembered in the world. So he became steadfast in prayer and devoted himself to fasting until he would never be eating or not praying and remembering. Every time he passed by a people, they would say: 'Have you seen more of a show-off than this man?' So he turned on himself and said: 'May your mother be bereft of her son! I never saw you remember except out of evil and I never you behave except with corrupt intentions and beliefs'. After that, he overturned all his actions such that he did not do anything without having amended his intention first. Thus, Allāh changed his condition and granted him acceptance to the point that he would not pass by a people without them saying: 'Allāh now has mercy on this man!'" Al-Ḥasan therefore said: "So be sincere in your actions towards Allāh." He would also say: "Son of Ādam! You wear the attire of the worshippers yet carry out the actions of the *Fāsiqīn* (wrongdoers)! Woe unto you! Where is your sincerity? Indeed, you shall stand on the

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid,* p. 159.

Day of Judgment before the One Who knows your treachery and what you conceal in your breast!"[1] He would also say that Sa'īd bin Jubayr reportedly saw a man worshipping sluggishly so he said: "O son of my brother! Verily, Islām is alive so enliven it and do not kill it, or may Allāh kill you and not give you life!" And he would say: "Whoever exposes himself in public has praised himself and the bad that he did."[2]

Obedience to Allāh:

Allāh says:

"*O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger* (Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), if you believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.*" (*an-Nisā'*, 4:59)

And He says: "*And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allāh. (And say, O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), to these polytheists:) Such is Allāh, my Lord in Whom I put my trust, and to Him I turn (in all of my affairs and) in repentance.*" (*ash-Shūrā*, 42:10)

(1) *Ibid*, p. 160.
(2) *Ibid*.

Al-Ḥasan would say: "In the saying of Allāh, the Sublime: "*And those who give that (their charity) which they give (and also do other good deeds) with their hearts full of fear (whether their alms and charities have been accepted or not) because they are sure to return to their Lord (for reckoning).*" (*al-Mu'minūn,* 23:60) Those who give what they gave 'with their hearts full of fear' and so they do the good deeds they have done fearing that they will not be saved from the punishment of their Lord, the Majestic."[1] He is also reported to have said: "Allāh, the Exalted, has ordained the acts of obedience, and helps one perform them, and has forbidden the acts of disobedience, and helps one avoid them. Work as much as you feel able to endure the blazing Fire, and know that you have no excuse if you end up in it."[2] And he said: "I never saw such Fire cause one who flees from it to sleep and I never saw such Paradise cause one who requests it to sleep."[3]

The following is a story that has been told about Al-Ḥasan: When 'Umar bin Habīrah assumed governorship of Irāq, he sent a messenger to Al-Ḥasan and ash-Sha'bi ordering them to stay in a house where they remained for as long as a month, or approximately that. One day after that, a servant entered upon them and said: "The Governor shall enter upon you" and so 'Umar arrived who was walking with his walking stick. He greeted them both and sat down in honour of them,

(1) *Az-Zuhd lil*-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 74.

(2) *Ibid,* p. 75.

(3) *Ibid.*

then he said: "Verily, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik has issue a decree in which I know there lies much destruction. If I obey it, I will be disobeying Allāh, and if I disobey it, I will be obeying Allāh, the Sublime. Do you consider any relief in my pursuit of it?" Ash-Sha'bi spoke first but displeased him with what he said, so Ibn Habīrah turned to Al-Ḥasan and said: "What do you think, O Abī Sa'īd?" "Ash-Sha'bi's answer was as you heard it", he replied. So Ibn Habīrah said: "But what do you say, Abī Sa'īd?" So he answered: "I say, O Governor 'Umar bin Habīrah, that an angel among the angels of Allāh almost descends to you in harshness. Do not disobey Allāh's command, for you shall be extracted from the vastness of your palace and thrust into the confinement of your grave. O 'Umar bin Habīrah! If you fear Allāh, He shall safeguard you from Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, while Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik cannot safeguard you from Allāh. O 'Umar bin Habīrah! Do not believe that Allāh sees you according to the most reviled thing you have done in obedience to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, as that is a horrible thought and it closes the door of repentance to you. O 'Umar bin Habīrah! You have met people at the heart of this *Ummah* who followed the world when it was in the worst of states. O 'Umar bin Habīrah! Verily, I fear for you the Day when you will stand before Allāh and fear Him, about which He says: "*This is for him who fears standing before Me and fears My threat.*" (*Ibrāhīm,* 14:14) O 'Umar bin Habīrah! If you put your trust in Allāh by obeying Him, the calamity of Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik will be sufficient and if you put your trust in Yazīd bin 'Abd al-

Mālik by disobeying Allāh, Allāh will leave you to him." At that point, 'Umar cried and then left while still shedding his tears.

Al-Ḥasan would also say: "When a man sought knowledge, it would not be long before it could be seen in his humbleness, his sight, upon his tongue and his hands, in his prayer, in his speech and in his disinterest in worldly allurements. And a man would acquire a portion of knowledge and put it to practice, and it would be better for him than the world and all it contains – if he owned it he would give it in exchange for the Hereafter."[1]

Contemplation and Meditation:

Allāh says: "*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding*] (*Āl-'Imrān,* 3:190). And He says: "*And also in your own selves; will you not then see?.*" (*adh-Dhāriyāt,* 51:21) Thus, contemplation and meditation of the self, universe and visible signs of Allāh give reason for the strengthening of faith, as such entities reflect the greatness of Allāh, the Creator and are proof of His power to create them. Such signs include their beauty, harmony and order that continue to confuse reason and intelligent minds but stand as proof of the capacity of Allāh's Knowledge and the completeness of His Wisdom. It goes without saying that the extent and variety of Allāh's Favours and Blessings are too numerous to recount; that itself serves as proof of

(1) *Ibid,* p. 77.

Allāh's Mercy and calls for acknowledgment of His greatness, gratitude for His generosity, remembrance out of praise of Him and sincerity towards the Religion for Him, all of which constitutes the secret and the spirit of faith.[1]

It follows that Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī advocated worshipping in the form of meditation and contemplation and urged the people to practice them. Thus he (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: "Indeed, the best deeds are meditation and godliness."[2] And he said: "Whoever knows his Lord loves Him and whoever reflects on the world abstains in it. The believer does not amuse himself to the point of forgetfulness and whenever he thinks, he feels sad."[3] And he would say: "May Allāh have mercy on a man who looks and then thinks, thinks and then contemplates, contemplates and then perceives, and perceives and then has patience. For those people who perceive but have no patience, anxiety engulfs their hearts and they neither know what they require nor resort to what can help them. They therefore lose out in the world and the Hereafter; that is the clearest loss."[4] And he would say: "Remembering the Hour is better than standing in prayer at night."[5]

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(1) *Shajrat al-Īmān* [The Tree of Faith] by as-Sa'adī, p. 49; *al-Wasṭiyyah fi al-*Qur'ān [Moderation in the Qur'ān], p. 239.

(2) *Az-Zuhd lil-*Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 82.

(3) *Ibid,* p. 83.

(4) *Ibid,* p. 83.

(5) *Ibid,* p. 83.

Knowledge and the Scholars:

And he would say: "Understanding is the vessel of knowledge. Knowledge is the attestation of action. Action is the commander of good. Desire is a composite of disobedience and money driven and is the disease of the arrogant. The world is the marketplace of the Hereafter. The calamity of every calamity is that which strengthens one's disobedience towards Allāh' Favours."(1)

His Condemnation of Long-Term Hope and Disapproval of Arrogance:

Al-Ḥasan said: "In the life of this world, the believer is a captive, doing his best to free himself and not feeling any security until he meets the All-Mighty Allāh." And he said: "I swear by Him in whose Hands is my life. I know some people for whom the life of this world is lower than the dust they walk on." And he said: "A servant does not have long-term hopes except that it harms his work."(2) One of his pearls of wisdom was: "O son of Ādam! You are but days; with every day that passes, a part of you passes."(3)

On the subject of arrogance, Al-Ḥasan said: "I wonder at the son of Ādam! He uses his hand to wash himself once or twice a day, yet he seeks to compete with the All-Mighty?"(4)

(1) *Ibid*, p. 92.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 82.
(3) *Ibid*, p. 81.
(4) *Ibid*, p. 90.

It is said that Al-Ḥasan saw Na'īm bin Riḍwān walking haughtily, so he said: "Look at this! He does have a single limb that Allāh's blessing is not in and the *Shayṭān* (Satan) has a curse in."(1)

Disciples of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī Famous for their Knowledge of the Path of Longing:

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was one of the scholars of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* (People of Prophetic Example) and paid special attention to the knowledge of the spiritual path of longing (may Allāh have mercy on him). He had a council based in his own home that was dedicated to speaking about the meanings of asceticism and devotion.(2) The school founded by Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was like a shining star from where the finest group of scholars among the *Ahl as-Sunnah* radiated their beams. These included:

Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī:

He was the eminent *Imām* and "Master of the Scholars", Abū Bakr bin Abī Taymiyyah Kīsān.(3) He was a reliable source in the *Ḥadīth* and was altogether just, pious and knowledgeable.(4) If he were asked about a subject he knew nothing about, he would say: "I shall ask the people of knowledge." And he would habitually say: "I do not know", to

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(1) *Ibid*, p. 90.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4579/).

(3) *Ibid* (615/).

(4) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (7246/).

the point that Ḥammād bin Zayd said: "I never saw anyone say 'I do not know' more than Ayyūb and Yūnus." He loved to conceal his asceticism, saying: "For a man to conceal his asceticism is better than to reveal it."(1) Ayyūb performed the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage forty times and 'Ubaydullah bin 'Umar would feel at ease during the *Ḥajj* season when meeting with those whose hearts had been lit up with faith by Allāh, amongst whom was Ayyūb.(2) He was a friend of Yazīd bin al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, upon whose accession to the caliphate Ayyūb said: "O Allāh! Make him forget to remember me."(3) It was also said that nobody smiled in the face of people more than him.(4)

Among the stances and sayings of Ayyūb:

- ***His glorification of the Ahl as-****Sunnah:* Ayyūb said: "When I am informed about the death of a man from the *Ahl as-Sunnah* it is like losing one of my limbs."(5)
- ***His stance with the people of heretic beliefs and innovation:*** "He said: "One who carries out *Bid'ah* (innovation) does not work more diligently in it except that he gets further away from Allāh."(6) It is reported that Ayyūb said that Abū Qalābah said: "Do not sit with the

(1) *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 189.
(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (34/).
(3) *Ibid* (36/).
(4) *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 189.
(5) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (39/).
(6) *Ibid.*

people of heretic beliefs or debate with them, for I do not trust that they will pollute you with their deviance and distort what you previously knew."(1) It is said that he was one of the jurists of great reason.(2)

- ***His love for meeting brothers for the sake of Allāh:*** He said: "My love for the (*Ḥajj*) season and attending it increased because I would meet brothers there who I would not meet with elsewhere."(3)
- ***His worship:*** "He was famous for his extraordinary devotion to worship. He was a staunch advocator of hiding it from the view of the people and purifying one's intentions as sincerely for Allāh.(4) He was from the elite of al-Baṣrah and a follower of the *Tābi'īn* ('Second and third generation followers) and their jurists among whom he became famous for his virtue, knowledge and piety.(5) He performed the *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* pilgrimages many times in fulfilment of the Prophet's precept (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said: "Continually repeat the performance of *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah*."(6) Ayyūb performed the *Ḥajj* for forty years.(7) He would secretly perform prayer throughout the night and just before the

(1) *Imām Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī,* by Sulaymān al-'Arabī, p. 47.
(2) *Al-Bid'a wa an-Nahā 'anhā* [Innovation and Prohibiting It] by Ibn Waḍāḥ, p. 48.
(3) *Imām Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī,* by Sulaymān al-'Arabī, p. 47.
(4) *Ibid,* p. 50.
(5) *Mashāhīr 'Ulamā' al-Amṣār* [The Famous Scholars of the Major Cities], p. 150, no. 1183.
(6) *Musnad Aḥmas,* no. 167.
(7) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (35/).

morning he would raise his voice as if he had just got up at that hour."[1]

- ***Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's view of him:*** Al-Ḥasan said about him: "This is the master of the youth."[2] And he said: "Ayyūb is the master of al-Baṣrah's youth."[3] As for Ayyūb's view of his *Shaykh,* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, he said: "Al-Ḥasan would speak words that were like pearls. Others after him would speak and the words would come out of their mouths like vomit."[4] And he said: "I sat with Al-Ḥasan for four years and I never asked him (a question) out of awe for him."[5]
- ***His Death:*** After a lifetime spent worshipping Allāh, learning, teaching, fearing Allāh, holding fast to the *Sunnah,* enhancing its adherents, suppressing the people of heretic belief and innovation, and sincerely striving in word and deed for Allāh, Ayyūb died from the plague in al-Baṣrah in the year 131 AH.[6] Abū Naʿīm related in a narration that Ḥammād bin Zayd said: "Maymūn Abū Hamzah once came to me early in the morning of Friday before the prayer, and said: 'Yesterday, I saw Abū

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(1) *Al-Maʿrifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] (2241/); *Imām Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī,* by Sulaymān al-ʿArabī, p. 47.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Saʿad, (7247/); *Imām Ayyūb,* p. 75.

(3) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (33/); *Imām Ayyūb,* p. 75.

(4) *Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4577/).

(5) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (311/); *Imām Ayyūb,* p. 75.

(6) *Al-Wāfī bil-Wāfiyāt* (1054,55/); *Imām Ayyūb,* p. 96.

Bakr and 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them) in my sleep. I said to them: 'What has brought you here?' They both said: 'We came in order to pray over Ayyūb as-Sakhtiyānī'. He said: 'I did not know that he had died'. It was said to him: 'Ayyūb died yesterday'."(1)

Mālik bin Dīnār:

He possessed the knowledge of true scholars. He is counted among the reliable *Tābi'īn* and one of the assistants in transcribing the manuscripts of the Qur'ān.(2)

Among the stances and sayings of Mālik:

- ***Non-responsiveness to praise and criticism:*** He said: "Since I have known people, I have not rejoiced at their praise or hated their criticism because their praise is exaggerated and their criticism is exaggerated. If a scholar learns knowledge in order for work, he breaks it and he learns if for other than work, he becomes more proud."(3)
- ***Sadness of the heart:*** He said: "If there is no sadness in the heart it is spoiled." And he said: "Whoever is a branch of the flower of the world, his lusts shall dominate him."(4)
- ***"He came to steal, so we stole him":*** It is said that a

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (623/).
(2) *Ibid* (5362/).
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid* (5363/).

thief entered upon him but he did not find anything to take, so Mālik shouted to him: "You did not find anything from the world. Therefore do you not desire anything from the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter)?" The thief answered in the affirmative and so Mālik instructed him: "Make *wuḍū'* (ablution) and pray two units of prayer", which he did. They next left to go to the *masjid* (mosque) where Mālik was asked: "Who is this?" He answered: "He came to steal, so we stole him."[1]

- ***"The finest thing in this world is knowledge of Allāh":*** He said: "The people of the world left the world and they did not taste the finest thing in it." It was asked: "And what is that?" He replied: "Knowledge of Allāh."

- ***Anas bin Mālik's love for him:*** Mālik bin Dīnār said: "Thābit and Yazīd amd I went to see Anas and as we entered he looked as us and said: "How you resemble the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)! You are more beloved to me than my own children; if only they were virtuous like you. I shall supplicate for you in the early mornings."[2]

- ***His source of his income:*** He would transcribe a manuscript of the Qur'ān in four months and then he would spend his wages on groceries and eat them. He would spend two coins on salt every year to enrich his food.[3]

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid* (3364/).

(3) *Ibid.*

- ***His death:*** He died in 127 AH or 130 AH.[1] He was a scholar of the *Ahl as-Sunnah* and the flimsy traditions claiming that he mixed Islāmic spiritualism with elements of non-Islāmic spiritualism that have been specifically attributed to him are not regarded as true.[2] Rather, his biography tells of him being a great figure and a disciple of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Anas bin Mālik, al-Aḥnaf bin Qays, Sa'īd bin Jubayr, Muḥammad bin Sirīn, al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad, and other scholars of the *Ahl as-Sunnah.*[3]

Muḥammad bin Wāsi':

The devout scholar and exemplar, who I have spoken about in the section dealing with the conquests under 'Abd al-Mālik's reign, was a member of Qutaybah bin Muslim's army and spent some time in Khorasān.[4] Mālik bin Dīnār said: "The reciters (of the Qur'ān) are three: those who recite for the Merciful; those who recite for the world; and those who recite for kings. I consider Muḥammad bin Wasi' as one of those who recite for the Merciful."[5] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī used to call him "The Beauty of the Reciters."[6]

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(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Tārīkh at*

(3) *iyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5362/).

(4) *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 217; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (2353/).

(5) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (2345/); *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 214.

(6) *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 214.

Among his sayings are: "If a servant draws his heart close to Allāh, Allāh will draw the hearts of His servants close to him." And he said: "I have lived amongst men who were such that one of them would lie with his wife on the same pillow and his side of the pillow would be soaked with his tears under his cheek without his wife even noticing."

The abovementioned scholars were Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's most prominent juristic students in the knowledge of spiritual longing and asceticism and among his many followers who went on to have their own remarkable impact on the lives of the people. Today, we are in greatest need of reviving this knowledge that later became rare and associated with advocators of corrupt beliefs and aberrant concepts and ideas. The *Ummah,* however, unquestionably requires this traditional practice that draws its principles from the Book of Allāh, *Sunnah* of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the guidance of the honorable *Ṣaḥābah* (may Allāh be pleased with them) and those who traversed the path in accordance with the sound scholars. This is especially the case when faced with the materialistic attack and lustful despotism that is broadcast by global, national and regional media. Similarly, it is a factor of a nation's uprising to suppress its desires, purify itself from its ills, and revive hearts with excellent morals and sentiments, such as hope, fear sincerity and responsibility towards Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Disavowal of "Separation":

The Mu'tazilites (a name which originates from the Arabic word *I'tazala* meaning "to separate (oneself)", "to withdraw) allege that Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī agreed with their doctrine on *Qadar* (Decree) and that he associated himself with their sect. They therefore consider that Dawūd bin Abī Ḥind said: "I heard Al-Ḥasan say: 'Everything is determined by *Qadar* (Decree) and *Qaḍā'* (Fate) except for sinning'."(1) Likewise, they cite the letters he sent to 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān in which they maintain he speaks of *Qadar* in accordance with the Mu'tazilite school of thought.(2) Rebuttal of these allegations that are outright void of any substantial proof or bases can be achieved through the following:

- **The Mu'tazilites maintain** Al-Ḥasan **did not dissociate from them** This can be seen in al-Murtaḍā's mention of Al-Ḥasan's statement on *Qadar,* whereby he said: "Ayyūb narrated that Al-Ḥasan came and so he spoke to him about *Qadar* but he desisted from speaking about it. With regards to this, it has been narrated that he feared the authorities and so he desisted from engaging in any discussion on it."(3) Would it be that Al-Ḥasan, a man who always openly spoke the truth, feared the authorities?

(1) *Al-Munyah wa al-Amal* [Destiny and Hope] by Ibn Murtaḍā, p. 12; *al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadar* [Fate and Decree] by Dr. al-Maḥmūd, p. 185.

(2) *Tārikh al-Jadal* [The Hisory of Debate], pp. 321322-.

(3) *Al-Munyah wa al-Amal* [Destiny and Hope] by Ibn Murtaḍā, p. 15.

- **As for the letter attributed to him, ash-Shahrastānī says:** "I saw a letter attributed to Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī that was addressed to 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān who had asked him about *Qadar* (Decree) and *Jabar* (Fatalism) and the answer he gave him was in keeping with the teachings of the *Qadariyyah* school of thought and substantiated by verses from the Holy Qur'ān and proofs derived from reason. It might have been that this letter was from Wāsil bin 'Aṭā', since we know that Al-Ḥasan was not in the practice of contradicting the *Salaf* (Pious Forebears) who believed that *Qadar,* its good and its bad, is from Allāh, the Sublime. Rather, these words could very well have been compiled by them."[1] It is therefore not correct to attribute this letter to Al-Ḥasan, while it was the Mu'tazilites who ascribed these words to him based on broken narrations. Thus when al-Murtaḍā mentioned the people of *al-'Adl wa at-Tawḥīd* (Justice and Oneness), he classed Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as one of them and provided a long biographical account on him. Those who want to affirm that he was one of the people of *'Adl* maintain that he declared *'Adl* based on the narration of 'Alī bin al-Ja'ad who said: "I heard Al-Ḥasan say: 'Whoever claims that sinning is from Allāh, the Sublime, shall come with his face blackened on the Day of Resurrection and he recited: "*And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allāh, their faces will be black. Is there not in Hell an abode*

(1) *Al-Qadar wa al-Qaḍā'* [Decree and Fate], p. 186.

for the arrogant?." (*az-Zumar,* 39:60) ʻAlī bin al-Jaʻad is the one who said: "I heard Al-Ḥasan did not listen to it or engage with it."[1] This narration is obviously interrupted.[2]

- **Ibn Qutaybah mentions that** Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī **spoke about *al-Qadar*** , although he later renounced what he said directly after that and mentions that ʻAṭāʼ bin Yassār and Maʻbad al-Jahmī went to Al-Ḥasan to ask him questions, saying: "O Abī Saʻīd! The kings are spilling the blood of the Muslims, stealing money and do what they do, saying: 'Indeed, our actions are carried out in accordance with Allāh's Decree." So he said: "The enemies of Allāh tell lies."[3] Ibn Qutaybah said: "He commented on it in this manner and the like."[4] This is similar to what has been narrated about Al-Ḥasan as having rightfully said that Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to the ʻArabs who were *Qadariyyah* and *Jabariyyah* (i.e. fatalists who denied decree) and who charged their sins to Allāh, saying: "Verily, Allāh willed for us to carry out what we have done and ordered us to do it." Thus Allāh says: "*And when they commit a 'fāḥishah' ('evil deed, great sin, unlawful sexual intercourse'*), they say: 'We found our fathers doing it and Allāh has commanded us to do it'. Say: 'Nay, Allāh never commands *'fāḥishah'. Do you say*

(1) *Ibid*, p. 187.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Ibid.*

of Allāh what you know not?'." (*al-A'rāf*, 7:28)[1] Does what Al-Ḥasan said in the abovementioned narrations prove that he was a Qadarite? The answer to that is plain and simple because he rebuked those who blamed *Qadar* on their disbelief and sins, and there is no doubt that such a pretext is false and the speech of Al-Ḥasan is true.[2] Ibn Taymiyyah refers to him as having been concerned with a different sect of *Qadar,* not the *Qadariyyah*, who alternatively did not protest against *Qadar* in relation to sinning. And as Imām Aḥmad is reported to have said: 'Anyone who stressed sinning and disobedience to the people would be labeled a Qadarite, for which reason Al-Ḥasan was associated with *Qadar.*"[3]

- **There are narrations negating this claim:** 'Umar, the servant of Ghafrah, said: "The people of *Qadar* would impersonate Al-Ḥasan bin Abī Al-Ḥasan, while his beliefs were contrary to theirs. He would say: 'O son of Ādām! Do not approve of anyone who displeases Allāh and do not obey anyone in disobeying Him. Do not praise someone on behalf of Allāh's Favour and do not blame someone for what Allāh has not given you. Verily, Allāh is the Creator of all creatures and creation, so forsake what they create against Him. Whoever supposes that he is the enhancer of his wealth, let him enhance his life, or change his colour, or enhance his appearance and

(1) *Ibid*, p. 188.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Manhāj as-Sunnah* [The Way of the Prophetic Example] (1362/); *Al-Qadar wa al-Qaḍā'* [Decree and Fate], p. 188.

stature'."[1]

- **It is well-known that some Qadarite Mu'tazilites would lie about** Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad has cited in his *Kitāb as-Sunnah* [Book of the Prophetic Example] a number of narrations that testify to this. One of these is the narration by Ḥumayd who said: "Al-Ḥasan arrived in Makkah where its jurists, Al-Ḥasan bin Muslim and 'Abdullah bin 'Ubayd, had said to me: 'If you speak to Al-Ḥasan, tell him allocate us a day for us to speak together'. So when I spoke to him, I said: "O Abī Sa'īd! Your brothers would like it if you sat with them one day'. He replied: 'Yes, my pleasure', and he promised a day to them. As a result, they came and gathered together, upon which Al-Ḥasan spoke and I have never before or after that day seen him speak more eloquently than he did then. Thus, they asked him about a long treatise and he did not make a mistake in anything except for in one problem. A man said to him: "O Abī Sa'īd! Who created the *Shayṭān* (Satan; Devil)?" He answered: "Glory be to Allāh! Glory be to Allāh! Is there a creator other than Allāh?!" Then he said: "Indeed, Allāh created the *Shayṭān* and He created good and evil", at that point a man amongst them remarked: "May Allāh damn them! They tell lies against the *Shaykh!*"[2] About the *Ḥadīth* transmitted from 'Amr bin 'Ubayd, Ḥumayd said: "Do not

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] by Ibn Sa'ad, (7175/).

(2) *As-Sunnah* (The Prophetic Example] by 'Abdullah bin al-Imām Ahmad (2126/).

take from him as he lies about Al-Ḥasan."[1] 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad narrated that Ḥammād bin Zayd said: "Ayyūb is said to have said that 'Amr (i.e. 'Amr bin 'Ubayd) narrated that Al-Ḥasan said: 'Do not flog one who is drunk from wine'. However, 'Amr lied, as I heard Al-Ḥasan say: 'Flog the one who is drunk from wine'."[2]

Narrations of the sort that allege Al-Ḥasan (may Allāh have mercy on him) was a Qadarite or subscribed to their views are not true. Rather, the aim of the Mu'tazilites was to gain credibility by attempting to associate him with them otherwise he would have appeared to have been their adversary.[3] Furthermore, the Mu'tazilites additionally maintained they were like those first classes of Rightly-Guided Caliphs and others among the *Ṣaḥābah* who "withdrew" from the dispute.[4] Clearly, the incorporation of these claims by the Mu'tazilites were intended to show that they were the most pious and righteous group of all.[5] Students of knowledge and the Muslims in general know that the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Honorable *Ṣaḥābah* were free from being accused of separation and that they were the chief scholars of the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* who followed the Prophetic tradition.

(1) *Ibid* (2131/).
(2) *Ibid* (2131/).
(3) *Ibid,* p. 189.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyīn* [The Schools of Thought of the Islāmists] by 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Badwī (140/)

The "Just Leader" in the View of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī:

When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz became the new caliph, we find Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was by his side having assumed the role of his close confidante who preached and directed in the direction of the just leader. This role played by Al-Ḥasan was undoubtedly a positive one that demonstrated the desired function a devout scholar plays in assisting the righteous and making decisions for the welfare and victory of Islām. Of course, for us, this verifies the completeness of Al-Ḥasan's character, as not only did he partake in *Jihad* (striving for Allāh's Cause) and teaching, he was the pioneer of the school of social reform, he treated the ailments of the heart, he played a political role in the revolutions, and he judged the oppressors.

Here, his political person came into view not merely through his close affiliation with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz whose power he reinforced and whose reformations and renewals he theorized and supported throughout his rule. In a letter Al-Ḥasan wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, he said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Know that Allāh made the just leader the protector of every weak person, the challenger of every unjust person, the rectifier of every corrupt person, the strength of every weak person, the justice of every oppressed person and the comforter of every troubled person.

The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is like the loving

shepherd to his camel who kindly seeks out the lushest pastures for it to graze on, protects it from predators and surrounds it in an enclosure away from the heat and cold. The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is like a loving father who works hard for his children when they are young, teaches them when they get older, writes to them while he is alive and puts away for them for after his death. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is like the gracious, honest, merciful mother to her child who she carries reluctantly, bears reluctantly, nurtures as a child, stays up at night with him, soothes and calms him, breastfeeds him for some time, weans him for some time more, expresses joy at his good health and is saddened by his illnesses. The just leader, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is the guardian of the orphan and the treasury of the poor, fostering the little ones. The just leader, *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is as the heart is to the organs of the body: all are sound when it is sound, and all corrupt when it is corrupt. The just ruler, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is he who stands between Allāh and His servants, hearkening to Allāh's Words and making them hearken; looking to Allāh and making them look; obedient to Allāh and making them obedient. Therefore, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* act not in what Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious, has given you like a servant whose master has trusted him and given into his care his wealth and hid children, who then squanders his master's wealth and drive his children away, and reduced the family to poverty and scatters their fortune.[1] Know, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* that Allāh

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(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 224.

revealed the *Ḥudūd* (Fixed Reprisals) in order to deter people from impurities and obscenities, therefore how can one not enforce them? And Allāh revealed *Qiṣās* (Punishment of Equality) for the lives of His slaves, so how can those who reprise with them be killed for doing so?

Be mindful, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* of death and what comes after it, and the lack of supporters and helpers you will have when that comes. Accordingly, have the greatest fear in that regard and know, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* that you have a dwelling other than your current dwelling shall house you for a long time, separate you from your loved ones who shall surrender you to its cavity alone and companionless. Therefore, prepare your provisions for a Day on which a man shall flee from his brother, his mother, his father and his children. Remember, O *Amir al-Mu'minīn,* when the graves shall be poured forth and that which is in the breasts of all men and women shall become known, secrets will be disclosed and no young or old person shall escape judgment.

So now, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* whilst you have the time before it is suspended and all hope is lost, do not rule the servants of Allāh with the leadership of the ignorant. Do not proceed with them on the path of the oppressors and neither allow the arrogant to dominate over the weak; those people do not uphold or protect the covenant of the believer. Therefore, take charge of your responsibilities, as well as your subordinates' responsibilities, and bear your burdens, as well as your subordinates' burdens, and do not be fooled

by those who would enjoy seeing you suffer and who take pleasure in their world from your misfortune in your Hereafter.

Do not look at your power today but look at your power tomorrow when you shall be captured by the ropes of death and shall stand before Allāh in an assembly of the angels, prophets and messengers, upon which faces shall appear before the Living, the Self-Existing One. Indeed, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* I do not preach to you in order to override those who came before me and neither do I do it to show you compassion and pity. I send you my letter as a medicine whose beloved can drink from it whenever he desires to be cured and good health from it. May the peace, blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*."[1]

The significant points made in this letter are:

- That the most important characteristic of an *Imām* (Leader) is that is he is not only just but his justice is complemented by parental compassion and mercy;
- That the foremost person to observe the *Ḥudūd* (Fixed Penalties) of Allāh is the *Imām* because if he does not follow them, this entitles his subjects to not follow them;
- That the *Imām* is the executor of *Qiṣāṣ* (Reprisal), although he does not have the right to kill anyone unlawfully and since *Qiṣaṣ* protects lives, how then can

(1) Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 56; *al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Inimitable Covenant] by 'Abd Rabbihi (112/); *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 179.

the one authorized to spare lives use it to destroy lives?

- That reforming the subjects is through the reform of the *Imām,* just as their corruption is from his own corruption; he is therefore responsible for his actions as well as the actions of his subjects such that his responsibility is considered momentous;
- This responsibility especially materializes with regards to his appointment of governors and officials such that he is the first person responsible for the acts perpetrated by his governors and officials; hence, it is necessary that the *Imām* does not vest the arrogant with authority over the weak because they will neither protect their sacred rights nor observe Allāh's commands in their actions and governorship. Should the *Imām* appoint a single person like this, he shall bear the burden of their misdeeds as well as his own.(1)

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī Describes the World to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz describing the *Dunya* (world) to him: "And so, you should know, *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* this life is temporary and not permanent; Adam was sent down to it as punishment. Therefore, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, beware of this life and know that the best provision pertains to abandoning excessive indulgence in it

(1) *Tārīkh at-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī* [The History of Islāmic Sufism] by Dr. Badwī, p. 180.

and that wealth pertains to being deprived of its splendour. This life always has its victims. It brings disgrace to those who are mighty in it and poverty to those who collect it with greed. Its parable is poison: when one unknowingly eats the poison, he will die as a consequence. Therefore, be like a wounded man who nurses his wounds for a while for fear of extended repercussions and endures the bitterness of the medicine so that his illness is not prolonged. Beware of this deceiving life, for it cheats and lures people with its beauty. Life lures with its false adornments and deceives with its hopes. It has beautified itself for those who seek it in marriage and become just like the beautiful bride at whom the eyes stare, whom the hearts adore and the inner self covets. However, life kills all of its husbands. Yet, its current husbands do not take a lesson from the fate of her ex-husbands whom it killed, nor do the latter advise the surviving ones against its danger. Whoever covets life satisfies his desire from it and becomes further deceived by his excessive indulgence in its affairs. He becomes a tyrant who forgets the return (to Allah), until his feet are removed from this life, and consequently, his sorrow increases and his grief intensifies. He departs this life without sufficient provisions and is introduced to the Afterlife without having firm foundations to rely on. Beware of this life, O *Leader of the Faithful*, and even when you feel more delight in it as ever before, you should be more aware of it as ever before. Whenever owners of life's splendour feel comfortable in this life, it is followed with an affliction. What seems delightful in this life is connected to hardship, and whatever is thought

permanent, is bound to vanish. The joys of this life are mixed with sadness. Whatever leaves it never comes back and whatever is to come is unknown, so awaiting it does not avail. Its wishes are unreal, its hopes are false, its core is impure and its essence is encompassed by grief. Verily, the son of Ādam is always in danger from this life while still in it.

Anyone who does not know what the reward of Allāh is will think it a reward for him. And anyone who does not know what the punishment of Allāh is will think it a punishment for him. This world has its own way of perdition, but this perdition is not in itself perdition. This world humiliates anyone who honours it, scorns anyone who highly respects it and destroys the one who completely resorts to it. This world also has its own way of killing; it is like the poison that is eaten by the man who does not know that it is a poison, yet it contains the elements of his death. Therefore, provision in it is leaving it and wealth in it is its poverty. Thus, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* be in it like the one who is trying to heal his own wounds, the one who is patient with the strong medicine for the fear that his disease will not last. Be like the one who is hiding and protecting himself for a while for the fear of what he hates for a long time.

The virtuous people in it are as follows: their logic is to follow that correct way and to proceed humbly. Their food is from the good resources and materials. They go about closing their eyes from what it not theirs and what is forbidden for them to see. They are as frightened on land as they are on

sea. Their supplications when they are happy are the same as when they are in trouble. Had it not been for the fixed durations prescribed for them, their souls would not have been strengthened in their bodies for fear of punishment and desiring the reward. The Creator is Exalted and Elevated so highly within their selves that the created ones are considered extremely small in their eyes.

O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Look into and unto the world with the look of the passing ascetic; do not look with the gaze of the tormented lover! You should also know that it replaces the guest or the passer-by with the lodger. It torments the one who indulges in its pleasures and destroys the one who feels safe in it. This world does not bring back what is gone. Anything that is coming from it will inevitably arrive. Also, every man who follows what is clear in it will be agonized and aggrieved. So beware of it for its hopes are false, its expectations are not valid, living it is torment, and its serenity is opaqueness and dreariness. In it, you are always in danger, either in an ephemeral passing of grace, or in overwhelming plight, or in an outrageous catastrophe, or in an imminent death. Thus, the wise and reasonable man will lead a hard life in this world, for he is in danger because of his graces and good. He is also very wary from its plight and he is certain of death in it."

Upon reading his letter, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz cried and wept, saying to those around him: "May Allāh have mercy on Al-Ḥasan. Verily, he does not cease to waken us from sleep and alert us from heedlessness. How excellent he is! His most eloquent and articulate admonishment in such a genuine

manner is due to Allāh!" 'Umar wrote back to Al-Ḥasan: "Your useful advice reached me and I have sought healing from it. You have described the world by its true description and the sensible person is the one who is apprehensive, for it is as if everything that is destined to die has already died. Peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh upon you, O Ḥasan." When Al-Ḥasan received his letter, he said: "The accomplishment of the one who speaks the truth and delivers admonition, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* is due to Allāh."[1]

Al-Ḥasan also wrote to him: "You should know that the greatest terror and the most abominable and horrid thing which will occur to you is still coming your way and has not yet been overcome. By Allāh, you will face that and go through it no matter how hard to try to avoid it. You shall either safely escape it or it shall break you down."[2]

His Stance on the Revolutions that Happened During His Era:

Al-Hasan believed that shifting corruption could not be achieved by the sword but rather through *tawbah* (repentance), returning to Allāh and imparting advice. On this matter, he said: "Nothing good can come for the one who tries to make a change by means of the sword; verily, change cannot come except through *tawbah* (repentance)."[3] Regarding perseverance in that which one dislikes, the Prophet (may

(1) *Az-Zuhd lil-*Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [The Asceticism of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī], p. 169.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 169.
(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (7131 ,125/).

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever sees something from his *Amīr* (leader) that he dislikes then let him be patient and let him not raise his hand [away] from the obedience to the leader. No one breaks away from the community as much a hand span and then dies without him dying an ignorant death."[1] Based on his legal understanding of this *Ḥadīth,* he considered the dominance of a leader to be a punishment from Allāh, the Sublime, requiring one's patience and endurance. He said: "If a people are afflicted by their authority, let them persevere until they are liberated from it. But if they resort to the sword then they have put their trust in it and, by Allāh, they will never arrive at a good day."[2]

We previously mentioned regarding the revolution of Ibn al-Ash'ath that Al-Ḥasan took the opinion that so long as leaders observe the *Jumu'ah* (Friday congregational prayer), remain part of the community, divide the booty and property,[3] and uphold the *Ḥudūd* (Fixed Penalties) then it is not permissible to dissent from them.[4] Al-Mawdūdī comments on Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's stance in dealing with the revolutions as having doubted their severity.[5] If we look the revolution of Yazīd bin al-Muhallab, Al-Ḥasan viewed it with extreme concern and believed that the just caliph, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, should imprison Yazīd bin al-Muhallab on account of spreading corruption and because he had gone

(1) Al-Bukhāri, no. 6724; Muslim, no. 1849.
(2) *Shadhrāt adh-Dhahab* (1137/); *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 191.
(3) *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 194.
(4) *Ibid,* p. 194.
(5) *Al-Khilāfah wa al-Mulk* [The Caliphate and Sovereignty] by al-Mawdūdi, p. 149.

away with the Muslims' money to dispose of it as he pleased.[1] As Al-Ḥasan considered Yazīd bin al-Muhallab's hostility to be a result of his own desires and ambitions, he went to the mosque where the people had assembled and sought the support of Mu'ādh bin Sa'ad who said to him: "Do you have anyone who we know in mind?" However, he could not think of anyone in society and so he showed distinguished courage and fearlessness to speak the truth by ascending the *Minbar* (pulpit) upon which he addressed Ibn al-Muhallab in a raised voice, saying: "By Allāh! We consider you a leader who ought not to be that." During this revolution, Al-Ḥasan's stance was one of unprecedented courage such that he went out to the people and raised the banners of war, upon which they assembled into rows and waited to set out against Yazīd bin al-Muhallab, as the people shouted: "He calls us to the *Sunnah* of the Umaryan (Two 'Umars). Al-Ḥasan replied: "Yazīd bin al-Muhallab yesterday tied the necks of those who you see before you and then handed them over to the Banī Marwān so that they could slaughter whoever they wanted. I dissent from them, so you too should dissent from them. Do not be a party to either of them." He also said: "I call you to the *Sunnah* of al-'Umarayn which is to lead him by his feet to prison and put him in chains."[2]

Al-Ḥasan's sermonizing became more frequent with his increasing hatred for the revolution whereby he addressed the people saying: "Remain on your mounts and arm

(1) *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 196.

(2) *Wafayāt al-A'yān* [The Deaths of Noble Figures] (3280/); *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, p. 197.

yourselves. Fear your Master, Allāh, and do not kill each other over the fleeting world or the greed that prevails in it, for its inhabitants are not imperishable and they cannot attain pleasure from it. Indeed, the majority of its inhabitants are foolish, degenerate sinners and people of pretention and waywardness. However, the world is such that no one other than the righteous are saved from it."[1] The people stood with Al-Ḥasan and said to him: "If they wanted (to take) you then do you will that we stop them?" He answered them by saying: "I would be contradicting you if I did not forbid you from it. Would I order you not to kill each other over someone else and call you to kill each other over me?"[2] This was Al-Ḥasan's attitude towards every controversial issue in that he endeavored to bring the believers together and put an end to any sectarianism between them.[3] According to Silm Ibn Abī adh-Dhayyāl, a man asked Al-Ḥasan a question whilst some people from ash-Shām (the Levant) were listening. He said to him: "O Abī Sa'īd! What do you say about the *Fitan* (trials), such as that of Yazīd bin al-Muhallab and Ibn al-Ash'ath?" He answered: "Do not be a party to either of them?" At that point, a man from ash-Shām sprang to his feet and said: "And not even to the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*?" Al-Ḥasan replied angrily: "Yes, not even the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!*" [4] This goes to show that Al-Ḥasan adopted a peaceful approach to enjoining good and forbidding evil and he did not support armed revolution for the

(1) *Tārīkh aṭ-Ṭabari* [Aṭ-Ṭabarī's History] (7498/).
(2) *Ibid* (7499/).
(3) *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 198.
(4) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (7121/); *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 198.

following reasons:

- Advocating setting out against them would have led to chaos, turmoil and corruption, and the chaos carried out by aggrieved people in one hour is not carried out in years of tyranny;
- Excessive rebellion against the leaders would ultimately weaken the Islāmic State and intensify impairment amidst the Muslims, cause their enemies to assail them and sabotage their rights;
- Spilling blood to rebel against the leader is unjustified and the oppressed pay for it by going from the hands of one oppressor to the more oppressive;
- The road to development was reform is the form of reforming the corruption of subjects if it is unfeasible to repair the corruption of the leader with the view that corruption prevailed on two levels and infiltrated two groups. Thus, he conceived that leaders do not change the people and association between them is fixed.[1]

"How Does a Nation Err with Someone Like This in Their Midst?!"

Khālid bin Ṣafwān said: "I encountered Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik and he said: 'O Khālid! Tell me about Ḥasan of al-Baṣrah's people'. I said: 'May Allāh elevate you! I can tell you about him with knowledge, as he is my neighbor and I sit in

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(1) *Tārīkh al-Jadal* [The History of Debate] (4576/).

his gatherings. I know on my part that his inner self resembles his outward self more than anyone. What he says is what he does, if a thing troubles him he takes care of it and he takes care of whatever troubles him. If he gives an injunction, he is the person to apply it the most and if he forbids something, he takes part in it the most. I saw that he enriched the people and I saw that they demanded and were in need of him’. At that point, Maslamah said: ‘You have said enough. How does a nation err with someone like this in their midst?!’”[1] Hishām bin Ḥassān narrated Al-Ḥasan said: “I heard Al-Ḥasan swear by Allāh that no one cherishes the *dirham* but that Allāh humiliates him.”[2] And he said: “Wretched comrades are the *Dinar* and the *Dirham!* They only benefit you once they have parted from you.”[3]

The Death of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī:

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī fell fatally ill during which time his son remained by his side to nurse and tend to him whilst al-Ha□an repeated the words: “To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return.” His son therefore remarked: “Is it as if you are saying these words over (something bad in) the world.” So Al-Hasan explained: “No, my son. I do not say these words except for myself who has never before been afflicted with anything like it.”[4]

(1) *Siyar A‘lam an-Nubala’* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4576/).
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid* (4587/).

As for the parting advice of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Abān bin Muḥabbir is reported to have said that when Al-Ḥasan was on the brink of death, some of his companions came to him and said: "O Abī Sa'īd! Offer us some words you can benefit us with." He replied: "I will equip you with three words, then you must leave me to face what I am facing. Be the farthest people from those things you have been forbidden, and be the most involved of people in the good you have been commanded to do; know that the steps that you take are two steps: a step in your favour and a step against you, so be careful where you come and where you go."(1)

Before his soul departed, Al-Ḥasan fell in and out of consciousness and upon awakening he said: "I alert you of gardens, springs and a lofty station." When he passed away in 110 AH,(2) on 5th Rajjab on a Friday at the age of eighty-eight, the entire population of al-Baṣrah attended his funeral which took place on Friday. Just prior to his death, his son, 'Abdullah,(3) said that a man said to Ibn Sirīn: "I saw (in a vision; dream) a bird take off with the best pebble in the *Masjid* (mosque)." So Ibn Sirīn said: "Your vision is true. Al-Ḥasan has just passed away." It had only been a very short while since Al-Ḥasan died.(4) Ḥamīd aṭ-Ṭawīl said: "Al-Ḥasan died on Thursday evening and on Friday we prepared his

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(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (2154/).

(2) *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* [The Memorial of the Hadith Masters], p. 72; *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 202.

(3) *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4587/).

(4) *Wafayāt al-A'yān* [The Deaths of Noble Figures] (272/); *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (7129/).

body, carried it after the Friday congregational prayer and then buried him. Everybody followed his procession, such that for the first time in the history of Başrah, the *Jumu'ah* (Friday) *Masjid* of the city remained empty at the hour of the '*Aṣr* prayer."[1]

May Allāh have mercy on Al-Hasan al-Başrī, the lofty model of an heir of the prophets and devout scholars, who was amongst the greatest figures in history and unparalleled in his asceticism, devotion, piety, knowledge, wisdom, chivalry and etiquette.[2] Furthermore, he was among those scholars who were active in the "State of Jurists" that was run by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wherein he was never sparing with his time, advice, preaching, instructing or guiding.

Conquests and Lifting the Siege of Constantinople:

Upon his assumption of the caliphate, one of the first tasks 'Umar embarked on was to stop the expansion into distant regions of the State's boundaries as well as to pull out the troops who had been subjected by Caliph Sulaymān to the leadership of his brother, Maslamah, in order to conquer Constantinople and subsequently keep it under siege for a period of two years. The forces had encountered many difficulties despite

(1) *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (4587/).
(2) *Ḥayāt* Al-Ḥasan al-Başrī by Dr Rawḍah, p. 503.

having successfully realised their aim, which is why upon 'Umar's accession to the caliphate, he wrote for Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik to pull out from Constantinople. Hitherto, Sulaymān had invaded it by land and sea, after which the situation had become so intense that the troops were forced to eat their own riding animals out of starvation and it had gotten to the point that a man would dismount his steed and have it cut up in the marketplace. Sulaymān had relentlessly borne down on them, which grieved 'Umar so much so that when he came to power, he felt that he could not postpone tending to the affairs of the Muslims for a single hour; hence the reason for his sudden letter.(1) Accordingly, 'Umar recalled the troops besieging Constantinople under Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik's command, on top of which he dispatched stallions and ample food supplies to aid the people. Accounts indicate that 'Umar provided some five-hundred troops with stallions.(2) Khalīfah relates that in 99 AH, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sent out mounts and food to Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik in Byzantium. He further ordered him to send aid to any close relations of those who were there and for him to authorise their withdrawal.(3)

In Islāmic al-Andalus (Muslim Spain), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz appointed as-Samḥ bin Malīk al-Khawlānī who he

(1) Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

(2) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabari's History] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by al-'Alī, p. 140.

(3) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalīfah's History], p. 326; *Tārīkh al-Islām* [The Hisory of Islām] by adh-Dhahabi, extracted from al-'Alī, p. 140.

commissioned to evacuate all Muslims from al-Andalus out of compassion for them should he fear the enemy would overcome them...in order to cut the enemy off behind the sea from the Muslims.(1) However, as-Samḥ could not conceive complete withdrawal in al-Andalus, writing: "The people have grown in number and spread to the different regions, therefore abandon that idea and eliminate al-Andalus from the African administrative district."(2) In the east, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, the Governor of Khorasān, ordering him to withdraw all Muslims and their families from the territories of Transoxiana. However, the people refused and said: "We cannot leave *Marw* (present-day Merv, Turkmenistan)." He consequently wrote to 'Umar to inform him of that and so 'Umar wrote back: "O Allāh! I have carried out what is upon me. Therefore, do not let the Muslims be invaded and suffice them in what you grant over them."(3) Khalīfah bin Khiyāt briefly states that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to al-Jarāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī, saying: "Do not invade and hold on to what in your possession."(4) To the nobility of Sind (India), 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to invite them Islām and obedience under Muslims rule whereby they would enjoy the same advantages as the Muslims and have

(1) *Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus* [The History of the Conquest of Andalusia] by Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah, pp. 123-.

(2) *Fajr al-Andalus* [The Dawn of Andalusia] by Ḥusayn Mu'nas, pp1367-; *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by Ṣāliḥ al-'Alī, p. 140.

(3) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabari's History] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by al-'Alī, p. 141.

(4) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalīfah's History], p. 326; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by al-'Alī, p. 141.

the same duties as the Muslims. The people of Sind were already familiar with 'Umar's reputation and doctrine of faith, upon which the kings and their armies submitted to Islām and gave themselves Arab names. 'Amr bin Muslim al-Bāhili had been 'Umar's delegate over that territory at the same of their submission.[1]

'Umar's cessation of expanding the State's borders was based on his substitution of the use of combatants in the border territories for peaceful dialogue in supressing armed resistance movements. This is not to imply that he wanted to abolish the function of the military that traced back to the time of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), especially as the military played an even greater role in protecting the State and maintaining peace and stability. The reality of the situation had been such that combatant-related regulations had affected every aspect of civil life and no State can realise prosperity through the institutionalisation of its army to maintain its law. The danger attached to this, which had become reality for the Muslim State, is that it becomes necessary to permanently keep the army in place and as a result, military detachments had been posted out to the major cities where they had become a stagnant feature, with no interventional regulation or administration.

Though 'Umar did not place much emphasis on expanding the State's borders as his predecessors had, he was not passive either, in that limited military movements continued to extend

(1) *Futūh al-Budān* [Conquests of the Countries], p. 42.

across a number of fronts during the period of his caliphate. In Azerbaijan, the Turks had launched an aggressive attack and massacred thousands of innocent Muslims and taken many captive. In response to the attack, 'Umar dispatched Ḥātim bin Nu'mān al-Bāhili to repel the Turks invading Azerbaijan, the outcome of which saw heavy losses with the death of all but some fifty Turks who were taken into captivity and handed over to 'Umar bin Khannaser (Syria).(1) The year 100 AH witnessed the Byzantine naval invasion on the shores of Latakia (Syria) whereupon they destroyed the city and lead its inhabitants into captivity. 'Umar subsequently ordered its fortification and entrenchment.(2) In 101 AH, 'Umar led a summer military campaign(3) and ordered the deportation of the hostile people of *Tarnadah* (within the Byzantine Empire) which he did out of sympathy for them against their enemies.(4) He had wanted to destroy al-Maṣiṣah in order to expose it to Byzantine invasions but he later refrained from going ahead with that and instead erected a mosque for its people in the region of Kefraya upon which his name was inscribed.(5) In doing so, he made it a vanguard for deterring danger from Antioch against the recurrent Byzantine invasions.(6)

(1) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalīfah's History], p. 326; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by al-'Alī, p. 142.
(2) *Futūh al-Budān* [Conquests of the Countries], p. 42.
(3) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabari's History] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by al-'Alī, p. 142.
(4) *Futūh al-Budān* [Conquests of the Countries], p. 220.
(5) *Ibid*, p. 163.
(6) *Al-'Alāqāt al-'Arabiyyah al-Bīzanṭiyyah* [Arab-Byzantine Relations], p. 119.

Despite 'Umar's curbed military activities and his withdrawal of the besieging troops of Constantinople and other important fortresses within Byzantium, he was extremely resolute when it came to defending the truth. This is indicated by the narration of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm who mentions that Caliph 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sent a messenger to the king of Byzantium to relate to him the story of a man who had been taken captive in his land (as we related earlier), whom he compelled to leave Islām and embrace Christianity or else they threatened to gouge out his eyes but nevertheless the captive chose his religion over his eyesight, and so they gouged out his eyes. 'Umar therefore instructed that the following message be conveyed to the king of Byzantium: "I have been informed about so-and-so (referring to the captive) and I swear by Allāh, if you do not send him to me, I will dispatch army upon army against you until the first detachment is at your end and the last is at mine."(1) In the end, the king complied with his request and sent the man to him.(2)

It can thus be said that 'Umar's political vision comprised of regulating the laws of the Islāmic State and opening up the minds, reviving the hearts and purifying the souls of the nations that had newly entered into Islām. For that reason, he sent detachments of preachers and scholars to the primitive Bedouins and nations within the Islāmic State who were in the greatest need of Islāmic education.

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(1) *Ibid*, p. 131.

(2) *Ibid.*

The Importance of omprehensive *Da'wah* (Inviting to Islām)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the first Muslim ruler who moved his horizons from external conquests to internal revival. He concentrated his efforts on internal administration, economic development and the consolidation of his State. He aimed to do this by equipping his people with knowledge, paying attention to the establishment of justice among his subjects and removing the animosity and hatred that had bred between the Muslims. 'Umar targeted Islāmic teachings at people's hearts, minds and souls and launched a massive project to help realise this grand aim. Evidently, 'Umar was not the type of person who chased after ambitious and challenging projects, as his plans were feasible and practical and did not exceed into the unrealistic. Rather, he translated his projected into workable and applicable programmes, after ironing out any creases, which he encompassed with viable guarantees. It was these things that helped turn his ideas into reality and made his project of teaching and preaching Islām a success. Below are some of these contributing factors:

Enacting Laws Dedicated to Da'wah:

Where the State is committed to ensuring a number of scholars, preachers and intellectuals, through the enactment of laws, it is not inconceivable that they embarked on the

intellectual and preaching projects that they did out of choice or under the instruction of the State. Scholars and teachers were granted monthly stipends that allowed them to devote themselves to the task of disseminating knowledge with ample provisions and supplies.(1) Under this system, the reciter of the Qur'ān who had committed it to memory would go on to recite it for the people and teach them its rulings, the transmitter of *Ḥadīth* who could relate complete narrations would spread the prophetic *Ḥadīth,* the jurist who had studied the books and learned how to deduce its legal teachings would teach the people about the affairs of their religion so that they worshipped Allāh with insight, and the student devoted himself to learning, studying or researching. All of those above who might have otherwise been distracted by their families or possessions were relieved of financial need by having their wages taken care of by the State. 'Umar handled this by cutting off such misgivings and worries altogether by ensuring that they and their dependants would lead comfortable lifestyles at the expense of the State from the funds of the *Bayt al-Māl*. What 'Umar did was a real favour that allowed him to encourage all capable and qualified individuals to disseminate knowledge and serve Islām and the *Ummah.*(2)

'Umar granted one hundred *Dinar* from the *Bayt al-Māl*

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(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz,* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 184.

to anyone who applied himself to a mosque in any Muslim land with the aim of gaining and spreading knowledge, and teaching the Qur'ān and its recitation.(1) Abī Bakr bin Abī Maryam narrated: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to the Governor of Ḥomṣ (western Syria): "Inform the people of the welfare from the *Bayt al-Māl* that can enrich them should they engage themselves in the likes of reciting the Qur'ān or conveying the *Aḥadīth*."(2) Abī Maryam also narrated that 'Umar wrote to the Governor of Ḥomṣ: "Look for people who make every effort to gain knowledge and confine themselves to the mosques over pursuing the world and grant each one of them a hundred *dinar* from the *Bayt al-Māl* to help them continue to do what they are doing. Do this as soon as you receive this letter of mine, as the best of charity is the hastiest. Peace be upon you."(3) Sustenance was also allocated to whoever narrated stories of the Prophet's expeditions (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the merits and virtues of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions). Inn Shibah mentions that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered a man in al-Madīnah to narrate stories to the people and in return he gave him two *Dinar* per month. When Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik assumed office, he reduced it to six *Dinar* a year.(4) In relation to 'Umar

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(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

(2) *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* [The Principles of the Prophetic Narrations], p. 178; *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 72.

(3) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] by Ibn Kathīr, extracted from *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 72.

(4) *Akhbār al-Madīnah* [News of Madinah] extracted from *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by

offering sustenance to disseminators of knowledge as a means of impeding any financial concerns or worries on their part, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr mention that Yaḥyā bin Abī Kathīr said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his officials ordering them to offer stipends to students of knowledge and relieve them of their needs for that pursuit."[1]

Encouraging Scholars to Openly Spread Knowledge:

This was achieved by employing the mosques as centres of learning for teaching the people their religion, reciting and listening to students of knowledge, transmitting the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* and reviving the *Sunnah*.[2] 'Ikrimah bin 'Ammār, who was from the Yemen, said: "I heard a letter of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz which read: "To proceed: Order the people of knowledge to spread knowledge in their mosques, for indeed the *Sunnah* has been caused to die."[3] A narration by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr tracing back to Ja'far bin Burqān ar-Raqqī (from north-east Syria) relates that he said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to us: 'To proceed: Order the people of jurisprudence and knowledge in your vicinity to spread the knowledge granted to them by Allāh in their assemblies and mosques'."[4]

'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 73.

(1) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* [Declaration of Knowedge] (1228/); *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 73.

(2) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 72.

(3) *'Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* [The Principles of the Prophetic Narrations], p. 178; *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 73.

(4) *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm* [Declaration of Knowedge] (1228/); *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz*

Directing the Ummah to the Importance of Knowledge:

Regarding this, 'Umar said: "If you are capable, be a scholar but if you are not then learn. If you cannot do that then love them and if you cannot even do that then do not dislike them." He then went on to say: "Allāh has made a way out for he who accepts it."(1)

Dispatching Devout Scholars to North Africa:

Not only did 'Umar send scholars to the major cities but he also paid attention to the desert regions to teach and explain to its peoples the Laws of Allāh. As such, he sent Yazīd bin Abī Mālik and al-Ḥārith bin Muḥammad into the desert to educate the people on the *Sunnah.* Having offered both of them stipends, Yazīd accepted but al-Ḥārith did not, saying: "I cannot take a fee on knowledge that has been granted to me by Allāh." When this was mentioned to 'Umar, he said: "While we do not consider what Yazīd did as wrong, may Allāh enhance the likes of al-Ḥārith among us."(2) 'Umar's response here expresses the necessary characteristics the Muslim ruler

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by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 73.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Life of 'Umar] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm extracted from '*Umar* by az-Zahīlī, p. 74.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Life of 'Umar] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 160; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

should have in that he showed intellectual resilience and flexibility. Thus, he did not say that it was wrong for someone to take money for intellectual services but at the same time he asked Allāh to increase the likes of those who perform these services without taking a reward other than the reward of Allāh.[1]

To Egypt, 'Umar sent the honourable imam, *Mufti* (issuer of legal opinions) and "the scholar of al-Madīnah", Nāfi', the slave and narrator of Ibn 'Umar. 'Abdullah bin 'Umar is therefore reported to have said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sent Nāfi', the slave of Ibn 'Umar, to the people of Egypt to teach them the *Sunan* (Prophetic traditions)."[2] He also sent ten of the *Tābi'īn* from the Egyptian School across Africa to teach and explain the religion to its people, spread the *Ḥadīth* of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)_ and to grant them the goodness and virtue that had prevailed over their brethren in the Ḥijāz, Shām (Levant) and Irāq that had effectively become strongholds of knowledge.[3] Accordingly, they set out to North Africa to penetrate the hearts, minds and souls with the Religion of Allāh. The ten devout scholars were sent after 'Umar had set out the aims of his educational plan in those regions, which were:

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(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

(2) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5979/); *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* [The Memorial of the *Hadith* Masters] (1100/).

(3) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p 69.

- Choosing devout scholars renowned for their knowledge, jurisprudence, preaching and impartiality to the elite for the job of teaching and inculcating Islām in people;
- Implementing a far-reaching plan that incorporates teaching the Arabic language and erasing illiteracy within the native Berber tribes that would subsequently facilitate an understanding of and interaction with the Qur'ān and *Sunnah;*
- Emphasising connecting people with the Glorious Qur'ān which is the strong rope of Allāh by means of opening up Qur'ān schools and institutions for the purpose of teaching Qur'ān memorisation and *Tajwīd* (the rules of recitation);
- Clear notification of the *Ahl as-Sunnah*'s doctrines of belief;
- Teaching people the *Ḥalāl* (permissible) and *Ḥarām* (prohibited).[1]

It is no exaggeration to say that North Africa witnessed many blessings during 'Umar's reign owing to the appointment of a righteous governor over it and the deployment of devout scholars and jurists to its regions. Below are brief profiles of these figures:

- **Ismā'īl bin 'Ubaydullah bin Abī al-Muhājir:**

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz appointed him to Africa in the

(1) *Ash-Sharaf wa at-Tasāmī bi-Ḥarakat al-Fatḥ al-Islāmī* by aṣ-Ṣallābī, pp. 3067-.

Islāmic month of al-Muḥarram, 99/100 AH. He quickly earned a reputation for being an excellent governor, as Ibn Khaldūn says: "All Berbers embraced Islām during his days. Ten jurists and scholars from among the *Tābi'īn* were sent with him to teach the people the affairs of the religion and explain to them the *ḥalāl* and the *Ḥarām*."[1] On account of this governor's ascetic and humble character, he was eager to spread knowledge and justice to the people. He was a scrupulous memoriser of the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as Ibn 'Asākir reports him as having said: "We ought to memorise the *Ḥadīth* in the same manner that we memorise the Qur'ān." Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dawūd, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad and others reported *Hadith* from him. He resided in Kairouan as a teacher and conveyer of the *Sunnah* for a period of thirty-three years until his death in 131 AH.[2] Ismā'īl's personality combined competence, knowledge and humility, the fruits of which contributed to the solidification and stabilisation of Islām in North Africa. It is important for leaders and commanders to aspire to realise such lofty characteristics and for us to concern ourselves with them when looking at their persons.

- **Bakr bin Suwādah al-Jadhāmī, Abū Thamāmah (d. 128 AH):**

(1) *Tārīkh al-Fatḥ al-'Arabī fī Lībyā* [The History of the Arab Conquest in Libya], p. 148.

(2) *Madrasat al-Ḥadīth fī al-Qīrūwān* [The School of Prophetic Narrating in Kairoaun] (222-14/).

He resided in North Africa for more than thirty years as a transmitter of *Ḥadīth, mufti* (issuer of legal opinions) and jurist. The people benefited from him tremendously and narrated on his authority such that he introduced to Kairouan the narrations of a number of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) including those of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, Suhl bin Sa'ad as-Sā'idī and Sufyān bin Wahb al-Khawlānī. He additionally narrated on the authority a large group of the *Tābi'īn,* among whom was Sa'īd bin al-Mussayib and Ibn Shihāb az-Zahrī. It is said that the number of his religious teachers was close to forty. Accordingly, many of the inhabitants of Kairouan narrated on his authority, such as 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Ziyād and Abū Zar'ah al-Afrīqī. He was thereby considered a reliable transmitter of *Ḥadīth* and is therefore a relied upon by Muslim, al-'Arba'ah, al-Bukhārī, Ahmad, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others. His reputation extended to Egypt despite the length of his stay at Kairouan where he died.[1]

- **Ju'thul bin 'Āhān ar-Ru'aynī al-Qatabāni, Abū Sa'īd (d. 115 AH):**

Abū al-'Arab, Ibn Ḥajr and others count him among the *Tābi'īn,* though they do not mention which of the *Ṣaḥābah* he narrated from. He was a transmitter of *Ḥadīth,* a jurist and reciter. He assumed the office of Military Judge in Kairouan wherein he dispensed an extensive amount of knowledge for a period of more than fifteen years.

(1) *Ibid.*

'Ubaydullah bin Zaḥr, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Ziyād and Bakr bin Sawādah, who was his colleague in disseminating knowledge, consequently narrated on his authority. He is authenticated by most critics and al-Arba'ah, Aḥmad and others report from him. He died during the caliphate of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik in 115 AH.[1]

- **Sa'ad bin Mas'ūd at-Tajībī: Abū Mas'ūd:**

He narrated from a number of the *Ṣahābah,* including Abū ad-Dardā'. He also narrated on the authority of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a messenger, one of which some have counted him as one of the *Ṣaḥābah*. Surprisingly, however, most sources do not ascribe companionship to him. He had lived in Kairouan from where he dispensed a great deal of knowledge across North Africa and his intellectual gatherings were always replete with wisdom and eloquent preaching. He was firm with the commanders and officials. Among the people of Kairouan, Muslim bin Yassār al-Afrīqī, 'Ubaydulah bin Zaḥr and 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Ziyād narrated from him. Ad-Dabāgh mentions that he died in Kairouan after having spread a great deal of knowledge, although he does not give the exact date of his death.[2]

- **Talaq bin Ja'bān al-Fārisī:**

He has alternatively been referred to as Jābān, though

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid* (222-14/).

the first name appears to be the correct one. He was a *Tābi'ī* who met with 'Umar and questioned him on various matters, however, most of his narrations are on the authority of the *Tābi'īn*. He was a learned jurist and scholar from whom Mūsā bin 'Alī and Ibn An'am among the people took narrations. Neither the duration of his stay nor the date of his death has been documented in any account.(1)

- **'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Rāfi' at-Tanūkhī, Abū al-Jahm (d. 113 AH):**

He entered Kairouan as early as 80 AH and it was under the administration of Ḥasān bin an-Nu'mān that he was considered one of Kairouan's most esteemed judges. He continued to dispense knowledge therein for close to thirty-three years and was a great benefit to the people. From what is known of his reporting, he introduced the narrations of a number of *Sahābah,* including the likes of 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās, to the people of Kairouan. 'Abdullah bin Ziyād al-Afrīqī, 'Abdullah bin Zaḥr al-Kanānī, Bakr bin Sawād al-Jadhāmī and other people from Kairouan narrated on his authority. He was the first person to assume the role of Judge in Kairouan and he died in 113 AH.(2)

(1) *'Asr ad-Dawlatyn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah wa Ẓuhūr Fikr al-Khawārij* [The Era of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid States and the Emergence of Kharijite Thought], p. 45.

(2) *'Asr ad-Dawlatyn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah wa Ẓuhūr Fikr al-Khawārij* [The Era of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid States and the Emergence of Kharijite Thought], p. 45.

- **'Abdullah bin al-Mughīrah bin Abī Bardah al-Kanānī:**

He had been residing in Kairouan prior to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's delegation for a long time and so he was well-known to its people, particularly for his fairness and God-consciousness. 'Umar appointed him to the office of Judge in 99 AH after having learned about his knowledge, virtue and religious practice. He continued to occupy that post up until his resignation in 123 AH. He was a humble, devout ascetic who taught the Book and *Sunnah* to the people of Kairouan where he served for more than fifteen years. Ibn Hibbān mentions him among the reliable sources and commends him for his virtue, knowledge and religious practice.[1]

- **'Abdullah bin Yazīd al-Ma'āfirī al-Ḥablī, Abū** 'Abd ar-Raḥmān **(d. 100 AH):**

He entered Kairouan early on, perhaps with Mūsā bin Naṣīr in 86 AH given that he was among the participants of the conquest of al-Andalus and then returned to Kairouan where he built a house and mosque upon which he was assigned to the intellectual delegation by 'Umar. However, he died in 100 AH, just one year after the official assigning, in spite of which al-Mālikī said: "The African people gained a great deal from him and the abundant knowledge he disseminated therein. He related to them the *Ḥadīth* of a number of *Ṣaḥābah* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, Ibn 'Amr

(1) *Ibid*, p. 46.

and Abū Dharr. In turn, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Ziyād, Abū Karīb Jamīl bin Karīb al-Qāḍī (d. 139 AH) and others from Kairouan narrated from him. He was a upright, pious man with a strong determination to convey the *Sunnah,* because of which he had a major influence on the intellectual life, particularly in relation to the spread of the *Ḥadīth,* in Kairouan. He erected a mosque in the city to hold his intellectual circles and counsels, a fact which critics agree on, and his narrations appear in Muslim, al-Arba'ah, Ibn Wahb's *Jāmi'*, Aḥmad and others.(1)

- **Wahb bin** Ḥayy **al-Maghāfiri:**

Ibn Abī Ḥātim maintains there are those who give him the name: Ḥayy bin Mawhab, which has also been verified by Abī Zar'ah. He invaded Africa a long while back given that he had enquired to Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH) about the eating utensils of the Moroccan people. He was among the individuals delegated by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and he had lived in Kairouan where he disseminated a wealth of knowledge until his death there. He related to the people the *Ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās and others and narrated on the authority of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a messenger. Among the people of Kairouan, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Ziyād al-Afrīqī narrated from him, although sources to do indicate his position in terms of *at-ta'dīl wa al-jarḥ* (the science of

(1) *Ibid,* p. 46.

criticizing and praising).[1]

The above-mentioned ten jurists were among the *Tābi'īn's* finest jurists who 'Umar sent to North Africa to teach and inculcate the people with the correct understanding of their religion. Accordingly, the people had a good opinion of them and they represented righteous models and exemplars. Before these ten, many *Tābi'īn* had gone over to teach the people the injunctions of the religion, intellectually and practically.[2] Nevertheless, these ten in particular played a fundamental role in explaining the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīṭh* and in spreading the correct doctrinal and practical teachings of the *Sunnah*.

In addition, the scholars helped those entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims to counteract foreign doctrines and focus on the teachings of Islām. Al-Mālikī documents that following the Kharijite uprising against Ḥanẓalah Ibn Ṣafwān in Ṭanjah in 122 AH, Ḥanẓalah gathered those scholars who had been sent by 'Umar to North Africa to teach its people religious knowledge. Hence, they wrote the following epistle for the Muslims to emulate and ponder on its contents:

"Indeed, the people of knowledge, by Allāh, His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (may peace and blessings of

(1) *Madrasat al-Ḥadīth bil-Qīrūwān* [The School of Prophetic Narrating in Kairowan], (222-14/).

(2) *Asr ad-Dawlatyn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah wa Ẓuhūr Fikr al-Khawārij* [The Era of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid States and the Emergence of Kharijite Thought], p. 47.

Allah be upon him), know that everything that Allāh revealed refers back to ten *Ayāt* (signs; lessons; verses; proofs): commands, restrictions, promises, warnings, news, rulings, obscurities, lawful matters, unlawful matters and parables. Therefore commanding is to command good, restricting is to restrict evil, promises are of Paradise, warnings are of the Hellfire, news is of past and future nations, rulings are to be applied, obscurities are to be believed in, lawful matters can be pursued, unlawful matters are to be avoided and parables are moral lessons. Therefore, whoever enjoins a command and discourages a restriction then that is considered a sign of good news and security against warning. And whoever authorizes lawful matters and forbids unlawful matters, and refutes knowledge that the people disagree over concerning Allāh, with clear obedience and righteous intention, he has won and succeeded and he has lived the life of this world and the Hereafter. Peace."[1]

This epistle is a document of great importance as it illustrates the genuineness of knowledge of this intellectual delegation and clarifies the legitimacy of their aims in sum. It further entails a consideration of the great benefit that would have prevailed for it to have been read on the pulpits of the mosques in all districts of the North African region.[2]

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(1) *Riyāḍh an-Nufūs al-Mālikī* (1103 ,102/).

(2) *Asr ad-Dawlatyn al-Umawiyyah wa al-'Abbāsiyyah wa Ẓuhūr Fikr al-Khawārij* [The Era of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid States and the Emergence of Kharijite Thought], p. 48.

His Letters of Exhortation to India's Nobility and Others:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to India's nobility inviting them accept Islām on the provision that they enjoy the same rights as the Muslims as well as fulfill the same duties as them. 'Umar's reputation had preceded him and in consequence of that Jayshabah bin Dāhir embraced the message,(1) as did the kings who, like him, adopted Arab names. The kings of Sind continued to be Muslims during the days of 'Umar and Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik.(2) Accordingly, 'Umar sent out his emissary to teach them their newly accepted religion,(3) just as he had sent letters and messengers to the kings of Transoxiana calling them to Islām, which some of them also accepted.(4) As for Julius Caesar of the Roman Empire, 'Umar dispatched an envoy under the leadership of 'Abd al-A'lā bin Abī 'Umrah to invite him to accept Islām.(5)

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(1) *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [Conquests of the Countries], p. 428; *"Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 173.

(2) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] extracted from *"Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 173.

(3) *"Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 173.

(4) *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [Conquests of the Countries], p. 415.

(5) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and End] by Ibn Kathīr., extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 173.

Encouraging Non-Muslims to Accept Islām:

'Umar took it upon himself to encourage non-Muslims to enter into Islām by means of offering financial incentives in order to win their hearts and in doing so, 'Umar was following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Ibn Sa'ad mentions that 'Īsā bin Abī 'Aṭā', a Shāmi (Levantine) who was in charge of the Official Board in al-Madīnah, narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would sometimes grant money to those who were inclined towards Islām.(1) He further mentions that 'Umar gave someone a thousand *Dinar* to bring him to Islām.(2)

Resolving the Special Case of the Ahl adh-Dhimmah (Non-Muslims living under Muslim Rule):

'Umar granted justice to the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* who had entered into Islām by abolishing the *Jizyah* (Tax paid by non-Muslims) that was unlawfully being levied upon them. Not only did his kindness in this regard prompt a noticeable increase in the number of non-Muslims who embraced Islām, so did the arrangements he put in place with respect to the *Bayt al-Māl*. For instance, he wrote to the Governor of Khorasān, al-Jarāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī, saying: "Exempt anyone you see praying towards the *Qiblah* (in the direction of the

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5350/); *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 173.

(2) *Ibid* (5350/).

Ka'abah, Makkah) from paying the *Jizyah*)."[1] Next, he sent out messages to call the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* to accept Islām, for example, he sent a message to al-Jarāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī, in which he ordered him to call those who were paying the *Jizyah* to enter into Islām. He added that if they had already done so and accepted Islām in front of him, he should relieve them from paying the *Jizyah,* based on the premise that they enjoyed the same rights as the Muslims and were obliged to fulfill the same duties as them.[2] The outcome of this initiative saw the conversion of ten thousand people to Islām in obedience, whilst in Khorasān alone, some four thousand non-Muslims embraced Islām at the hands of its Governor, al-Jarāḥ bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī.[3] In the *Maghrib* (Arab West", i.e. the western region of North Africa), the indigenous Berber population submitted to Islām at the hands of 'Umar's Governor over that principality, Isma'īl bin 'Abdullah bin Abī al-Muhājir.[4]

This testifies to the importance 'Umar placed on inviting to Islām with wisdom and kindness, which yielded positive results beyond compare. Moreover, he was able to acquire new Muslims without having to undergo multiple wars or at

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(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa-Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 174.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5386/).

(3) *Ibid* (5386/).

(4) *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [Conquests of the Countries], pp. 2323-; *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa- Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 174.

the expense of martyrs, as they had been his own subjects already living amidst the Muslims at whom he aimed the call to Islām. Through employing such tactics as wisdom, kindness and support, Islām spread extensively during the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that was realized in the form of fervent preaching work carried out by devout scholars and graduates of the intellectual schools that had thrived under the Umayyad State. It was these individuals who went on to execute 'Umar's project of scholastic preaching to the masses.

Fiscal Reforms during the Reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

'Umar's monetary policy was in no way improvisatory given that he took full responsibility of the State and every step and measure was taken for accounts and guarantees were put in place to ensure the proper execution of every proposal.(1) His policy worked as per the following points:

Strict Adherence to the Book and Sunnah:

He sacrificed his entire policy towards this end, which is evident from the correspondence he had with his delegates and the sermons he delivered to his subjects. By way of example is his saying: "The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48.

be upon him) left his *Sunnah* and governorship after him was carried out in accordance with the *Sunnah,* adherence to the Book of Allāh and reliance on the *Dīn* of Allāh. It is not for anyone to change or replace, neither should they hold an opinion in contradiction of it."[1]

Enforcing the Values of Truth, Justice and Expelling Injustice:

This formed the foundation of 'Umar's policy so that all aims and means he pursued were in harmony with it. The enforcement of truth and expulsion of injustice has its basis in the principles of Islāmic Law and is a fundamental objective of it. Allāh says: "*Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and Balance (Justice) that mankind may uphold justice.*" (*al-Ḥadīd,* 57:25) Ibn al-Qayyim says: "The structure and foundation of the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law) are built on ruling and the welfare of worshippers' livelihood and provisions for the Hereafter. Thus, it is total justice, total mercy, total welfare and total wisdom. Every issue that therefore diverges from justice to injustice, from mercy to contra to it, from welfare to corruption and from wisdom to futility is not from the *Sharī'ah.*"[2] Accordingly, 'Umar would revert to the truth something that appeared to be in error and he would say: "There is nothing easier for me to crumble than clay and there is no book easier

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 40.

(2) *I'lām al-Muwaqi'īn* by Ibn al-Qayyim (33/).

for me to respond to than a book I have already read and covered. Upon realising that the truth lied in something else, I crumbled it all."[1]

'Umar's Political and Economic Goals:

- Fair Redistribution of Income and Wealth:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz strove towards the redistribution of income and wealth in an equitable manner that pleased Allāh and realized the values of truth and justice. His administration of impartial justice went against the interests of the Umayyads who were accustomed to all sorts of licenses and could hardly tolerate any check on their previously unbounded freedom. 'Umar was accustomed to monitoring the perversities attached to their lavish lifestyles before his own caliphate and had noticed the detrimental effects they had on the State's subjects. He had once critcised Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik's policy on distribution, saying to him: "I see that you enhance the wealth of the rich and abandon the destitute in their poverty."[2] From an early stage, 'Umar was aware that the social disparities were a result of iniquitous financial distribution, which is why he drafted his new policy with justice for the poor and oppressed in mind. In order to arrive at this aim, 'Umar exercised some practical tactics, which included:

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p, p. 113.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 135.

- Prohibiting the governors and powerful figures from having exclusive power over the *Ummah*'s wealth and forcefully and illicitly confiscating assets and property, in which case 'Umar returned everything to their rightful owners if they were known or else deposited them into the *Bayt al-Māl* (Treasury);
- Increasing spending on the deprived and destitute segments of society and ensuring sustainable and adequate standards of life by use of *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) and other resources of the *Bayt al-Māl*.(1) As we mentioned in the section on restoring rights to victims of illegal extortion, 'Umar executed this policy with the intention of adequately tending to the people, which can be seen from his sermons that he would give on a daily basis, saying: "It would be great if the rich agreed to give back to the poor until we and them were all equal. I shall be the first to do so."(2) In another sermon, he said: "Not one of you informs me of your need except that I do my utmost to block you off from that need and not one of you is extended something from me except that I wish to begin with myself and my family so that our and your lifestyles are equal."(3)

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 35.

(2) *Al-Idārat al-Islāmiyyah fī 'Izz al-'Arab* [Islāmic Management during the Glory of the Arabs] by Muḥammad Jurd 'Alī, p. 103.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Manāqibihi* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and His Outstanding Traits] by Ibn al-Ḥakm, p. 42.

'Umar was able to apply this development intellectually when he ordered the adjudication of debtors' debts, on which matter his official wrote to him: "What if we find a man possessing a house, workers, horses, furniture in his house, etc?" 'Umar answered: "It is necessary for Muslim men to have a dwelling in which they can rest their heads, workers to suffice their businesses, horses to fight against his enemies, and furniture in his house, yet in spite of this they may still be in debt. Therefore wipe any debts they have incurred."(1) 'Umar policy of distribution was thereby aimed at providing people with decent homes, means of transport and commodities (furniture) which he considered among the basic essentials without which a person would struggle in life.(2)

- **Attaining Economic Growth and Social Prosperity:**

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz endeavored by various means to realize this aim. Thus, he created a sustainable environment for development through the maintenance of the State's stability, abolition of *Fitan* (trials; discord; controversies) and restoration of rights. Subjects consequently became content with their rights and safe in their lands, especially as he had initiated what we would refer to today as infrastructural projects in the form of aqueducts, roads, passages, etc,

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1634-.

(2) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 38.

without which growth and development would not have been possible. 'Umar advocated the principle of economic freedom regulated by the standards of the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law). As a result, trade and commerce spread and thrived, which had a lot to do with the attention 'Umar gave to farming and agriculture as this sector was one of the greatest on an individual level and it also yielded substantial revenues for the State, which meant that both 'Umar and the *Ummah* reaped the fruits of this policy. In turn, the wellbeing of the State and its people prevailed, as a son of Zayd bin al-Khaṭṭāb said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz reigned for two and a half years, that is thirty months, and he did not die before men would come to us with large amounts of money and say: 'Allocate this to the poor', but he would not leave without taking his money with him since there was nobody to give it to. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made the people rich."[1]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Strategies for Realising the State's Economic Goals:

'Umar endeavored to achieve his economic goals via:

- **Creating a Sustainable Environment for Growth:**

The restoration of rights:

'Umar generated an atmosphere of peace and contentment

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 123.

after having implanted the values of truth and justice and restoring the extorted rights of the *Ummah*'s citizens in the name of rectifying wrongs.[1] Many instances of this have been related in the chapter: *'His Policy on Redressing Grievances'*.

Generating regulated economic freedom:

'Umar emphasized the concept of regulated economic freedom. He wrote to his officials: "It is out of obedience to Allāh which He revealed in His Book to invite all people to Islām and that people ought to be able to move with their wealth on land and sea without restriction or imprisonment."[2] On another occasion, he said: "Open up all bridges to allow for crossing without obstruction." 'Umar refused to get involved in price fixing, as 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Shawbān said: "I said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*! Why is it that the price of things is high during your time while they were lower under former governments?' He answered: "The people before me used to compel the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* to pay beyond their means and capacity until it appeared that they possessed nothing to sell and their livelihood had been smashed to pieces. I do not burden anyone with more than they can bear'. As such, a man was free to sell his goods at the price that he wanted and so I said: "Would you not

(1) *Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 43.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 94; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 47.

rather fix the price?" ʿUmar replied: "The price of something has nothing to do with us, only Allāh."(1) On another note, ʿUmar cracked down on illegal goods and banned any form of dealing in them, such as alcohol owing to its impermissibility to Muslims, not to mention its harmful and detrimental effects on society at large. ʿUmar would say: "Whoever we find consuming any intoxicants after having already warned him, we shall penalise him in his money and person and make him an example to others."(2)

ʿUmar's policy on restoring rights and reviving the spirit of disciplined commercial and economic freedom flourished and bore abundant fruits in the form of a massive influx of business and trade initiatives and the removal of the barriers that had proved to hinder such activities. Inevitably, this led to the growth of trade and consequently a rise in the total yield of income submitted as *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms), which by its very nature, through the redistribution of wealth into society, led to a rise in the quality of life at the level of the lower social classes. Not only had this further enhanced spending power but accordingly the consumption of goods and utilisation of services increased, which meant demand and supply improved; the outcome of all of this was economic rejuvenation, an enhanced quality of life at the different levels

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz] by Bashīr Kamāl ʿĀbidīn, p. 48.

(2) *Sīrat ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* [The Biography of ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz] by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakm, p. 103.

and enriched prosperity.[1]

- *Adopting a New Agricultural Policy:*

'Umar took measures aimed at increasing the *Ummah*'s agricultural efficiency, the details of which are provided below:

Prohibiting the sale of foreign land:

The people had earlier asked 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, al-Walīd and Sulaymān to permit them to buy land owned by the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule), which they allowed provided that they deposited its yields in the *Bayt al-Māl*. When 'Umar came to power, he left matters as they were for the reason that the whole situation has become complicated and entangled in issues of inheritance, women's dowries, debts and so on that made it impossible to extricate. Thus, he wrote an edict to be read out to the people in the year 100 AH that stipulated the rejection of any land purchased after 100 AH, which consequently brought an end to any purchases from being made after that.[2]

Besides that, the people of the land had appealed to 'Umar for charity to be imposed on them as opposed to the

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 48; *Siyāsat al-itifāq al-'Ām fīl-Islām* [The Policy on Public Spending in Islām] by 'Awf Muḥammad al-Karāwī, p. 372.

(2) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Ar-Rīs, p. 390; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 49.

Kharāj (Land Tax), to which he responded: "I do not know of anything that testifies to the material substance of Islām more than this land that Allāh made the *Fay'* (conquered land) of the people." Abū 'Ubaydah said that it was as if 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz considered the land to be *Fay'* (conquered land) and for that reason he forbade the people from buying it."[1] 'Umar wrote to Maymūn bin Mahrān: "To proceed: Stop the people of the land from selling their land, as they are selling the *Fay'* of the Muslims."[2] In view of that, 'Umar refused land belonging to people who had entered into Islām, that was therefore classified as land on which *Kharāj* was due, to be transferred over to *'Ushr* land[3] such that the *Kharāj* and *'Ushr* (revenue of the property of Muslims) continued to be levied on them, stating: "The *Kharāj* is paid on land and *'Ushr* is paid on property."[4] Such measures allowed 'Umar to preserve the main source of revenue from production by designating general ownership to the Muslim *Ummah* as opposed to transferring it over to smaller ownerships.[5]

Caring for farmers and relieving taxes due on them:

(1) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, p. 121, no. 256.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 122, no. 257.

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 50.

(4) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, p. 114, no. 235.

(5) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Ar-Rīs, p. 239; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 50.

Some of the Umayyad Caliphs preceding 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had got into the habit of overtaxing farmers so heavily that the farmers had been forced to abandon their land, which of course, had a damaging effect on State revenue. Furthermore, tax collectors had resorted to physical punishment as a means of forcing farmers to pay who as a result had no other option than to sell their livestock or even the clothes on their backs so as not to undergo the harsh punishment they were subject to.[1] With 'Umar's assumption of the caliphate, he exerted every effort to abolish all taxes that went against the *Shar'īah* (Islāmic Law). Thus, he wrote to his officials: "The people of Kūfah have been afflicted with misfortune, harshness and injustice concerning the Laws of Allāh and wicked practices have been committed against them by debauched officials...Do not take other than the weight of seven *Dirham* (the gold coin pressed by 'Abd al-Mālik) as *Kharāj,* as it neither portrays the Sassanid emblem or Persian depictions of their festivals." Likewise, he stopped tax collectors attempting to pocket the *Kharāj* for themselves as well as the practice of setting false rates of taxation The reason for this was because State officials had been falsely setting high tax rates and appropriating money so much so that they had exhausted farming and agriculture. 'Umar consequently resolved to set reasonable taxes, writing: "I have been informed that your officials in Persia set false rates of taxation above the rate that the people consented to...I have sent Bishr bin Ṣafwān and 'Abdullah bin 'Ajlān to

(1) *Aḍ-Ḍarā'ib fī as-Sawād* [Heavy Taxation] by ad-Dawrī, p. 57

investigate into it further and to return the money that has been taken from the people despite them not agreeing to pay such costly taxes."[1]

'Umar ordered fixed taxes to be abolished for the people of the Yemen, such as the *Kharāj* even though it was *'Ushur* land, concerning which he wrote to his official there: "Verily, you wrote to me saying that you arrived in the Yemen and found that fixed *Kharāj* taxes were being levied on the people and the *Jizyah* was being exacted from all people at any rate, whether barren, fertile, poverty-stricken, dead or alive! Glory be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and once again, glory be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds! Upon receiving this letter of mine, relinquish the falsehood you conceal for the truth that you know and practice only truth until both you and I are aware of it, even if that means you return just a fistful of the *Henna* plant to me as the returns of the entire population of the Yemen. Verily, Allāh knows that I would be happy so long as it complies with the truth. Peace."[2] To 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, he wrote: "Examine the land and levy the *Kharāj* accordingly. Do not burden a barren land with a fertile one and vice versa. Do not charge the revenue of barren land."

The reforms 'Umar demarcated in these letters to his officials not merely reiterate the merits of his own person and policies but further spell out the very former inequities that

(1) *Aḍ-Ḍarā'ib fī as-Sawād* [Heavy Taxation] by ad-Dawrī, p. 65.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 103; *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Ar-Rīs, p. 229.

'Umar rejected. His generous reforms and leniency led the people to deposit their taxes willingly and, amazingly, in spite of all oppressive measure adopted by the unjust officials for the realisation of taxes, 'Umar more than doubled the amount of revenue collected during his short but benevolent reign as caliph.[1] 'Umar's insistence on applying the truth and his indifference to the amount of revenue in favour of the methods of obtaining them meant the complete rejuvenation of the State's economy.

Revitalising and Cultivating Barren Land:

'Umar encouraged the revitalisation of barren land and agricultural reform in which regard he wrote to his official in Kūfah: "Examine the land and levy the *Kharāj* accordingly. Do not burden a barren land with a fertile one and vice versa. Do not charge the revenue of barren land."[2] And he wrote: "Whoever cultivates something then it belongs to him." 'Umar ordered the viceroy to launch a process of agricultural credit from the *Bayt al-Māl,* which served as a state-owned bank that provided loans to farmers whenever they wre afflicted with distress. He said to his viceroy: "Whoever is unable to pay the *Jizyah* for his land, give him a loan to be able to cultivate it. We do not need to collect the *Jizyah* for a year or two."[3]

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(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 52.

(2) *Ibid,* p. 53.

(3) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Yaḥyā bin Ādam, p. 99; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar

Like so, 'Umar gave special care and attention to farmers and took important measures to relieve them from distress. This is evident from the account which tells of an army of Shām (the Levant) passing by a farm and destroying it, upon which the owner complained to 'Umar who consequently granted him ten thousand *Dirham* as compensation.[1]

'Umar and Mineral Sources:

'Umar banned the ownership of minerals and permitted them to all Muslims on the premise that they do not specifically belong to any one sect over another, saying: "We regard lands rich in minerals as permissible to the Muslim masses and sources of benevolence. They thereby provide strength and benefit to those people in need of alms, which is why we deem it best to leave them alone just as Allāh sends down rain on all His servants whoever they may be."[2] According to this policy, income from State owned minerals, miscellaneous sources and trusts are classed as the property of the *Bayt al-Māl* to be spent on the Muslims, and therefore, constitutes an important part of the Islāmic socio-economic system.[3]

Launching Infrastructural Projects:

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bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 54.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 117.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 98.

(3) *Al-Itijāh al-Jamā'ī fī at-Tashrī' al-Iqtiṣādī*, p. 242.

During the time that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was the Governor of al-Madīnah, he repaired and enlarged the Mosque of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), besides constructing hundreds of new aqueducts and improving the suburban roads leading to the city.(1) It is not surprising then that once he became the Caliph, he initiated many projects aimed at enhancing the welfare of traders, farmers and travellers. Under the orders of al-Walīd, the public welfare institutions and projects set up by 'Umar received much stimulus. All over the vast empire, thousands of public wells, inns, hostels and guesthouses were constructed to accommodate pilgrims and travellers.(2) The channel for transporting food from Egypt to Makkah that ran between the Nile and the Red Sea continued to function up until the days of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's caliphate.(3) His official in Baṣrah wrote to notify him of the people's request for the construction of an aqueduct, which 'Umar authorised and named *Nahr 'Udayy* (The River of 'Udayy).(4)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Fiscal Policy on Revenues:

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(1) *Al-Ḥayāt al-Iqtiṣādiyyah wa al-Ijtimā'iyyah fī Najd wa al-Ḥijāz fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* [Economic and Social Life in Najd and the Hijaz duing the Umayyad Era], p. 56.

(2) *Khāmis al-Khalafā' ar-Rāshidīn* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: The Fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph] by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 170.

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 55.

(4) *Ibid,* p. 57.

Sure enough, fiscal policy on revenue and expenditure constitutes a crucial tool for realising economic goals.(1) For that reason, 'Umar launched his fiscal policy by increasing spending on the masses. He spent on redressing the grievances of people until Irāq's *Bayt al-Māl* was emptied and after that he brought money from the *Bayt al-Māl* of the Shām (Levant).(2) Spending accordingly went on agricultural and infrastructural projects so that all classes benefited from his munificent policy. With regard to revenues, 'Umar sought to restructure and reform the *Bayt al-Māl* through its revenues. Oppressive taxes such as the *Jizyah* were relieved from those who had entered into Islām, as were the extra taxes that farmers were harshly subjected to under former regimes and the illegal *Makās* (trading taxes that had been formerly levied during pre-Islāmic days).

By the same token, 'Umar reclaimed the stolen rights of the *Bayt al-Māl* by re-depositing all assets and grievances to it and cutting off all privileges enjoyed by the governors and agents. He also capped financial military dispensation, all measures of which led to prompting economic stimulus, the growth of trade and agriculture, and increased revenues.(3) Successively, revenues on *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms), *Kharāj*

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 129.

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 58.

(Land Tax) and *ʿUshūr* (Export and Import Duty) increased significantly that led to increased State funds during his reign. When ʿUmar managed to achieve social and financial justice with regard to the revenues and disbursements of the *Bayt al-Māl,* he then embarked on serving out the surplus shares to the people. Throughout history, it has been seen that whenever the State stays upright and acts in accordance with Islāmic *Sharīʿah,* its funds overflow in abundance, its citizens neither feel wronged nor burdened and they do not feel their welfare and interests have been neglected. In light of this, it seems fair to say that State funds are but a mirror image of its justice or injustice and its order or chaos.[1]

The revenues of the *Bayt al-Māl* during the reign of Caliph ʿUmar bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz were received as *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms), *Jizyah* (Tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule), *Kharāj* (Land Tax), *ʿUshūr* (Import and Export Duty), *Khums* (a fifth of the spoils of war), and *Fay'* (spoils taken without engaging in battle).

Zakāt (Prescribed Alms):

ʿUmar attached great importance to *Zakāt* and advocated abidance by it, as Allāh made it the inalienable right of the poor, needy, enslaved and wayfarer. He therefore laid emphasis on distributing it to those deserving individuals who were legally eligible to receive it.[2] In order to make sure that this was really

(1) *Ibid,* p. 58.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 60.

the case, 'Umar ordered his officials to personally seek out eligible recipients and give *Zakāt* to them,(1) which reflected 'Umar's determination to follow the guidance of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in that regard. Earlier leaders had neglected the duty of *Zakāt,* taken from it unlawfully and spent it on other things.(2) Alternatively, 'Umar's observance of the *Sunnah* was manifest in the orders he gave for the epistles of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and those of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) pertaining to *Ṣadaqāt* (forms of charity) to be copied. The *Ṣādaqāt* stipulated therein included camels, cows, sheep, leaves, dates, seeds and raisins, in addition to stating a quota for each category.(3) 'Umar also followed the *Sunnah* on allocating *Zakāt* in attestation to the saying of Allāh: "*Obligatory charity is only for the poor, needy, those employed to collect funds, those whose hearts are to be won, to free the captives, those in debt, those fighting for Allāh, and the wayfarer.*" (*at-Tawbah,* 9:60) Hence, 'Umar dispensed the *Zakāt* on those to whom Allāh makes its obligatory in His Book.(4)

Concerning collecting the *Zakāt,* 'Umar also followed the

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(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 129.

(3) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 934, p. 447; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 61.

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 94.

Sunnah and, in this manner, he appointed trustworthy officials who he ordered to carry out the task without oppression or excessiveness and to keep a charter of all those who had paid it.[1] 'Umar gave instructions for *Zakāt* to be taken on all money from which it was due and so it was taken from grants that had been bestowed on officials and the money that had been restored to the victims of extortion.[2] As part of his policy, he advocated giving priority to the nation from which the *Zakāt* had been collected if there were no others in greater need of it[3] and so upon receiving the revenues from his officials, he ordered them to go back to where the *Zakāt* was collected and distribute it there.[4] Such economic reforms around the collecting of *Zakāt* impacted its increase and his economic policy contributed to increasing the *Zakāt*. Hence, he was able to generate an atmosphere of peace and contentment by concerning himself with setting up enterprises and projects aimed at trade and agriculture, adhering to a policy of regulated economic freedom and abolishing unfair taxes, which collectively led to prosperous commercial and agricultural activity and a greater yield of *Zakāt*.[5]

(1) *Ibid*, p. 99.
(2) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 1226, p. 529.
(3) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* [The Grant of the Creator] (3322/); *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 61
(4) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 1917, p. 712.
(5) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 135.

In addition to this, 'Umar's reputation and piety would also have had a direct influence on *Zakāt* deposits owing to the enhanced trust that had been fostered between the ruler and the ruled, which is clear from all the people who rushed to pay the *Zakāt* when they heard about 'Umar's caliphate. Historical accounts confirm that the *Zakāt* was the surplus of the people that erased their needs at that time to that extent that a man would pay his *Zakāt* but there was nobody eligible to receive it.[1] Of course, at the root of this overabundance was the inducing of individuals in society to progress and produce to a level that was conducive to the growth of *Zakāt* revenues and the decline of eligible recipients.[2]

Jizyah (Tax Paid by Non-Muslims Living under Muslim Rule):

Technically, the *Jizyah* is per capita tax levied on a section of an Islāmic state's non-Muslim citizens and its basis come from the Book, *Sunnah* and *Ijmā'* (Consensus).[3] By levying the *Jizyah* on non-Muslim subjects, 'Umar was observing the *Sunnah,* which is why he overturned it for those who had entered into Islām, as the *Jizyah* is only required from

(1) *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5131/); *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 69.

(2) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 69.

(3) *Al-Ma'anī* [Meanings] by Ibn Qadāmah (10557/).

non-Muslims living under Muslim rule.[1] In spite of this, some of the Umayyad caliphs continued to exact the *Jizyah* from those who had entered into Islām and the notorious figure, al-Ḥajjāj, insisted on taking the *Jizyah* from new Muslims who he suspected of entering into Islām purely to evade paying it. Naturally, this incited much resentment against al-Ḥajjaj and the Umayyads.[2]

One of 'Umar's most important measures was his reform of the taxation system. Upon his accession to the caliphate, 'Umar hastened to administer the collection of taxes on a sound footing, which he did by alleviating the *Jizyah* from the Muslims.[3] His stance on this was unyielding and in a letter to his officials he determined the criteria, saying: "Whoever declares the *Shahādah* (Testimony of Faith), faces our *Qiblah* (Direction of Prayer; the Ka'abah, Makkah) and circumcises, do not levy the *Jizyah* on him." When the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) perceived 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's fairness and upstanding character, they hastened to enter into Islām. However, 'Umar's official complained to him because of the deficiency in *Jizyah* revenues, to which 'Umar responded: "Verily, Allāh sent Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a guide and not as a tax collector!"[4] Because 'Umar's policy was founded on

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 69

(2) *Aḍ-Ḍarā'ib fī as-Sawād* [Heavy Taxation] by ad-Dawrī, p. 58.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5345/); *al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by ar-Rīs, p. 230.

(4) *Ibid.*

establishing truth and justice, relieving the *Ahl ad-Dhimmah* of oppression, caring for their farms and levying the *Jizyah* on them in accordance with their individual financial capabilities, three classes were recognised and incorporated into its application: rich, average and poor. Accordingly, a land owner paid his *Jizyah* on his land, a craftsman paid it on his earnings and a trader paid it on his trade.[(1)]

Generally speaking, the obligation of the *Jizyah* depends on the financial ability of the country, which meant that a greater *Jizyah* was levied on the people of Shām (Levant) that the people of the Yemen on account of their wealth and affluence.[(2)] On the other hand, poor people unable to pay the *Jizyah* were exempt from it and instead received financial support from the *Bayt al-Māl,* a dispensation that was initially introduced by 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him).[(3)] 'Umar also lowered the rate of *Jizyah* for the people of Najrān given that after its calculation, it showed that although their figures had dropped by ten, they were still paying the same amount of *Jizyah* and so 'Umar levied a tenth of tax they had been paying. He also made it so that the duty of paying the *Jizyah* ended with one's death or conversion to Islām.[(4)]

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 99.

(2) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 107, p. 51.

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 71.

(4) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by ar-Rīs, p. 232.

'Umar's fiscal reforms of revenues and expenditures of the State meant the true function of the *Bayt al-Māl* was restored and it once again proved a blessing for poor Muslims during the pious regime of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Having been freely used for private purposes by some former Umayyad caliphs, 'Umar immediately stopped this unholy practice of abusing the *Bayt al-Māl* and never drew a penny from it himself inappropriately. The outcome of this was the spread of peace and security that provided the impetus needed by the people to advance towards greater productivity and development.(1)

Kharāj (Land Tax):

Kharāj is a tax levied by the State on agricultural land or land that is of benefit to its owners. (2) *Kharāj* revenues increased during the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to a total 124 million *Dirham*.(3) This increase was a direct result of his policy of reform that prohibited the sale of foreign land and in that way protected a main source of yield, just as it attended to farmers and lifted the heavy, unfair taxes that had retarded productivity. The policy was designed to restore, revive and cultivate barren land, in addition to establishing basic agricultural projects that facilitated the construction of roads

(1) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by ar-Rīs, p. 259; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 72.

(2) *Mu'jam Lughat al-Fuqahā'* [A Dictionary of the Language of Jurist], p. 194.

(3) *Al-Kharāj* ['Land Tax] by ar-Rīs, p. 238.

and watercourses.[1] In turn, the new roads enabled farmers to market their produce more easily, while the watercourses and aqueducts allowed them to irrigate their crops more cost effectively. In the end, the fruits of all such reforms were reaped and led to a rise in *Kharāj* revenues during 'Umar's reign. For in Irāq alone, the total yield of *Kharāj* per capita reached 124 million *Dirham* during 'Umar's regime, a staggering figure that had never before been realised under former regimes. Even during the days of al-Ḥajjaj, the *Kharāj* amounted to just four million *Dirham,* while it stood at 100 million during the caliphate of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him). This rise in *Kharāj* reflected the fiscal strength of the State given that the *Kharāj* of 'Irāq constituted the greatest source of its revenues.[2] Furthermore, supporting commercial and infrastructural projects and allocating funding to the poor and needy classes helped towards realising the State's economic goals, since the *Kharāj* revenues provided elasticity unlike the *Zakāt* which has to spent according to very explicit criteria.[3]

'Ushūr (Import and Export Duty):

Technically, the term refers to import and export duty on businesses owned by people of war and the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule).[4] It is a commercial

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 74.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 76.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Mu'jam Lughat al-Fuqahā'* [A Dictionary of the Language of Jurist], p. 312.

tax to which the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* and others who have been given protection are subject, levied upon their wealth that is set aside for trade coming into and out of Muslim lands. It value varies according to the trade, the country, the length of stay and how Muslims are treated in non-Muslim countries. It can only be levied on wealth once per annum and during 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz'z time it was set at a rate of twenty *Dīnār* per *Dhimmī*.[1] 'Umar paid attention to the *'Ushūr* revenues and clarified its provisos to his officials. He instructed them to keep a record of all collections to be referred to him in addition to prohibiting exacting the *'Ushūr* from the people without right.[2] With the administration of control and order, trade boomed under 'Umar's rule that saw new sources of income for the State and allowed for enhanced public spending. Some of the measures 'Umar employed to accentuate commercial activity within the State included:

- Abolishing superfluous taxes that had been imposed on the agricultural sector.[3] This reflected positively on the commercial sector in the form of a noticeable decrease in the prices of agricultural goods, which consequently increased demand and boosted the circulation of trade.

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(1) *Al-Mughnī* (10589/); *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 76.

(2) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 77.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 141.

This increase in supply and demand in conjunction with a fall in its prices points to the wise and guided policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that boosted not only the popularity and circulation of trade within the State but, what's more, in the rest of the Islāmic economy's sectors.[1]

- Repealing taxes on the commercial sector and cutting the *'Ushūr.*[2] This had a progressive effect on commerce and led to heightened commercial practice and business profits that generated more business initiatives along with it.[3]
- Prohibiting the subjection of traders and farmers to violent treatment for the purpose of collecting State taxes, a factor that also contributed to the promotion and development of commerce.
- Constructing inns on the eastern trade routes and enjoining upon the governors of these countries to accommodate the Muslim travellers who passed through their lands day and night and tend to their riding animals at the expense of the State. They were further instructed to double the stay of any traveller who complained of weakness to them and with respect to those traders whose business had ceased, goods had been stolen or were forced to turn around for some reason or another, they were to be given sufficient funds to cover the cost

(1) *At-Taṭawwur al-Iqtiṣādī fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* [Economic Development in the Umayyad Era], p. 218.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

of their return. There is no denying that the availability of these facilities and safety measures were among the factors that encouraged traders and commercial exchange.[1]

- He stopped grants from being given to traders so that trade was their only source of livelihood with the intention that they would care for it more and work harder at making it successful. This was especially important since trade at that time was strenuous, involving travel and lacking the expedient means of transportation that we have the benefit of in our day.
- Clearing the debts of insolvent traders whose debts were not on account of recklessness or abuse.[2] This decision led to fewer errors on the part of traders who had previously become bankrupt and allowed them to start trading again, especially as that particular group of traders were the ones who began their trade by means of borrowing the necessary capital.
- Urging regulation, standardisation and universal measures and weights in all corners of the State, which were then made legally binding by the State.
- Forbidding governors and leaders from engaging in trade in order to prevent their entry into the market from corrupting healthy competition between traders or influencing prices to meet their own interests. 'Umar

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(1) *Ibid*, p. 219.

(2) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, pp. 234, 235.

bin 'Abd al-'Azīz therefore attempted to preclude any unnatural influences affecting the impulsiveness of the market.[1]

- Prohibiting the practice of monopolisation, that concluded in his giving back all shops in Ḥomṣ (city in central Syria) that had been under the sole ownership of a group of traders. The son of al-Walīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik had unlawfully seized the shops and made them his own private property, because of which 'Umar annulled his rights to them and restored them to their rightful owners.[2] 'Umar's stance against monopolies and his reversal of them exacerbated revenues received from *'Ushūr* and generated new sources of income for the State to be righteously spent by 'Umar in its general interests.

Khums (A Fifth of the Spoils of War) and Fay' (Non-War Spoils):

"Spoils" refers to wealth seized from combatant non-Muslims, either forcefully or after having conquered them in battle.[3] *Fay'* is the name given to spoils taken without engaging in battle.[4] When 'Umar became Caliph, he set his sight on internally reforming the State, which is why he moved his horizons from expanding the State's borders

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(1) *At-Taṭawwur al-Iqtiṣādī fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* [Economic Development in the Umayyad Era], p. 219.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 220.

(3) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, p. 323, no. 626.

(4) *Al-Aḥkām as-Sulṭāniyyah* by al-Mārūdī, p. 199.

through external acquisitions and conquests to internal preaching and displaying a good example. In keeping with his approach, he sent messages to kings and nations, upon which the indigenous Berbers entered into Islāmic without any fighting.[1] For this reason, not much *Khums* materialized under ʻUmar's rule during which time the sources of *Khums* that did exist in the *Bayt al-Māl* came from previous conquests.[2] Nevertheless, ʻUmar strived to reform the balance of the *Khums* by designating a separate section for it in the *Bayt al-Māl,* independent from other sources of money.[3] Fittingly, ʻUmar instructed that it be allocated to the designation mentioned in *Surat al-Anfāl* such that it can be given to those who need it accordingly.[4] Thus, he ordered ten thousand *Dinar* from the shares of the relatives of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to be divided among the *Banī* Hāshim without discriminating between male and female or young and old. Fāṭmah bint al-Ḥusayn therefore wrote to him to thank him for what he had done, saying: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* You have given a servant to one who had no servant, clothed the naked among them and given spending money to those who could not find any

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz] by Bashīr Kamāl ʻĀbidīn, p. 81.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 81.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5350/); *Sīrat ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz* [The Biography of ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz] by Ibn ʻAbd al-Ḥakm, p. 72; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of ʻUmar bin ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz] by Bashīr Kamāl ʻĀbidīn, p. 82.

money to spend."[1] In this manner, 'Umar observed the rights of the *Khums*, as in the case of the conquest of al-Andalus (Spain) that had taken place prior to 'Umar's caliphate, upon which the *Khums* had not been allocated, and because of that 'Umar wrote to his viceroy there to display force and exact the *Khums* from the land.[2]

As for how he dealt with the *Fay'*, he followed the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the examples of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. He wrote a letter in which he mentioned the wealth and towns that Allāh had placed in the possession of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) without the Muslims having engaged in battle or mounted a horse. He drew on the verses of *Surāt al-Ḥashr* that were revealed concerning that and showed that there is not a single Muslim who does not have a right to the *Fay.'* Thus, the verses mention the *Muhājirīn* (Emigrants), *Anṣār* (Helpers) and those Muslims who come after them following the first *Hijrah* (Migration) until the end of the world.[3] On this point, 'Umar's stance was in consonance with the *Ijtihād* (independent judgment) of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) in his designation of the *Fay'* to the Muslim generations.[4]

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(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5390/); *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 82.

(2) *Tārīkh al-Islām* [The History of Islām] by Ḥasan Ibrāhīm (1320/).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 97.

(4) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Abū Yūsuf, p. 25; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin

'Umar perceived the *Khums* depository to be congruous with that of the *Fay'* and therefore merged them together as 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had done.[1]

As a whole, funds were spent for the welfare of the Muslims, on which matter he wrote: "As for the *Khums,* past leaders have differed on its allocation…and allocated it in various ways. We are of the view that if two shares of the *Fay'* were in the Book of Allāh, one would not contradict the other. 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh have mercy on him) passed a ruling on the *Fay'* that pleased the Muslims; hence, he made it obligatory that the people receive grants and ongoing maintenance and that entitlements be given to orphans, the needy and wayfarers. He was also of the opinion that the *Khums* and *Fay'* be combined and allocated to the places commanded by Allāh…Therefore emulate the just ruler as both *āyatān* (verses; signs) are harmonious: the *Āyah* of the *Khums* and the *ayah* of the *Fay'*. We thereby see it fit to join the two and make them the single conquered property of the Muslims without taking exclusive possession of them."[2] Ultimately, 'Umar's reforms to the *Khums* and *Fay'* revenues helped towards realizing the aims of his economic policy and the distribution of the *Khums* to the shares mentioned in the Qur'ān with preference given to those in need. Because of this

'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 82.

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 83.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 97; *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 838.

righteous policy of his dealing with the redistribution of wealth and income, the people were made to feel that they were being treated justly and that injustice had been eradicated.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Policy on Public Spending:

'Umar's Spending on Social Welfare:

To achieve the goal of redistributing wealth and income, 'Umar sought to increase spending on the poor and needy and ensure that proper health and social care was made available, as this was in fulfillment of the legal demands of the Qur'ān and Prophetic *Sunnah.* From the onset of his caliphate, 'Umar made his determination to follow the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* clear, as well as his commitment to truth and justice. Hence, he corresponded with the scholars to inquire about matters of Qur'ānic interpretation, whereupon Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī wrote to 'Umar concerning the *Sunnah* of *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) with the purpose of 'Umar's application of it during his reign. Part of what he wrote was: "A share goes to every poor and needy person as well as those who have been debilitated, such as the worker who has been harmed at work or the *Mujāhid* (fighter in the Way of Allāh) who has been harmed in battle. A share goes to those poor people who ask of the rich until they feel fully requited and no longer in need. A share goes to the Muslim captives in prison who do not have anyone… and a share also goes to those who attend the mosques who possess no wealth

(i.e. those who have no fixed income or livelihood) but do not beg from the people. A share goes to those afflicted with poverty and who are in debt provided that he has in no way disobeyed Allāh or been blamed for his debt...a share goes to every dislodged wayfarer who has no family to offer him shelter to meet the basic need of food, clothing, lodging, and other indispensables until his needs are met."[1]

Spending on the Poor and Needy:

'Umar would often mull over the poor and needy and from the beginning he strived to provide financial support for them. This is evident from the story we related earlier, in which his wife, Fāṭimah, asked him about reason for his weeping and he replied: "I remember that I have been appointed over the affairs of the *Ummah* of Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and then I think about the poor and starving, the lost and bewildered, the subdued captives, those who have little money and many children, and I see the same happening in furthest outskirts of the land. I know that Allāh will question me about them and that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will confront me concerning them. Hence, I fear that Allāh will not accept any excuses from me in relation to them and no argument will support me with the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Therefore, I seek

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 83.

mercy, O Fāṭimah, for myself, that causes my eyes to shed tears and pains my heart, and the more that I remember, the more I fear. Therefore, take lesson from that if you will or let your eyes shed tears."(1)

This conversation with his wife encapsulates the quintessence of 'Umar's policy on spending on the poor and needy, for which reason it deserves due contemplation. 'Umar clearly felt a great sense of responsibility had been thrust upon his shoulders, as the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock."(2) 'Umar therefore strived to meet the needs of his people, for example, a man came and stood before 'Umar and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* My needs have become so severe and, by Allāh, you shall be asked about me tomorrow when you will stand before Him." 'Umar, who had been reclining on a pole, began to cry until his tears dripped down the pole then he entitled obligatory maintenance to him and his family, in addition to paying him five hundred *Dinar* to tide him over until he received his maintenance.(3)

'Umar also took widows and their orphaned daughters into consideration, as we saw in the earlier case involving the Irāqi woman. The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 170; *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (15107/).

(2) *Al-Bukhārī,* no. 893.

(3) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5289/).

be upon him) said: "Those who look after widows and the destitute are equal to the ones striving in the way of Allāh and, in my eyes, the same as those who worship all night and fast all day."(1) In pursuit of this, 'Umar assigned a house specially for feeding the poor, the needy and wayfarers.(2) Yet it was not enough for 'Umar to only care for the poor and for that reason he extended his "flock" to cover the sick, handicapped and orphans. Addressing the province of Shām (Levant), he wrote: "Send every blind, disabled, paralyzed person or person suffering from a chronic illness that prevents him from praying to me. Assign a guide to every blind person, a servant to every two people suffering from a chronic disease...." He then went on to say: "Send every lone orphan to me...and assign a servant to every five to look after them equally."(3)

Spending on the Debtors:

Among the other segments of society that 'Umar took into consideration were the debtors, concerning whose share of the *Zakāt* Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri had written to him saying: "Those whose money had been harmed for Allāh's Cause... those who have been afflicted with poverty and are in debt, provided that he has in no way disobeyed Allāh in incurring that debt."(4) 'Umar took action on this issue in the form of

(1) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 6006.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5378/).

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 202.

(4) *Al-Amwāl* [Finance] by Abī 'Ubayd, no. 1850; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin

clearing the debts of the insolvent, in response of which his officials wrote to him: "What if we find a man possessing a house, workers, horses, furniture in his house, etc?" 'Umar answered: "It is necessary for Muslim men to have a dwelling in which they can rest their heads, workers to suffice their businesses, horses to fight against his enemies, and furniture in his house, yet in spite of this they may still be in debt. Therefore wipe any debts they have incurred."(1) 'Umar also wrote to the Governor of Kūfah who had written to 'Umar enquiring about some money he had collected, to which 'Umar replied: "You wrote to me concerning some money you have in your possession after paying the army's maintenance. Give it to those who have debts incurred through no corruption or to those who wish to marry but do not have the means. Peace."(2) He also wrote an edict to be read out in the *Masjid* (mosque) of Kūfah, stating: "Whoever has a trust he is unable to fulfill, give to him from the money of Allāh. Whoever wants to marry a woman but does not have the means to pay her dowry then give to him from the money of Allāh."(3)

Spending on Captives:

Allāh says: "*And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him) to the 'miskīn' ('needy'), the orphan and the captive, (Saying): 'We feed you seeking Allāh's Countenance*

'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 92.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1634-.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 67.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5374/).

only. We wish for no reward nor thanks from you. Verily, We fear from our Lord a Day, hard and distressful, that will make the faces look horrible (from extreme dislike to it)'." (*al-Insān*: 8-10) 'Umar paid attention to captives and spending money on them from the *Bayt al-Māl*, which can been seen from the letters he wrote to the Muslim captives in Constantinople, as we already mentioned in the section dealing with social life and prison reforms. As such, 'Umar ruled that they should be looked after and that spending should go on them, saying to his officials: "Do not allow for any Muslim in your prisons to be unable to stand for prayer due to being chained up. Do not put anyone in solitary confinement except for those men who have been sentenced to death. Allocate enough spending on them to feed them and keep them going."(1) He further ordered that all prisoners receive the appropriate seasonal clothing.(2)

Spending on Travellers and Wayfarers:

'Umar paid attention to travellers and wayfarers in the form of charging his officials to construct inns and guesthouses on the roads to accommodate and care for them. Thus, he wrote to one of his officials: "Set up inns in your country so that any Muslims passing through it may reside there for a day and night as well as having their riding animals tended to. Whoever has some weakness, let him stay for two days and two nights but if he has had to terminate his travels for some reason or another then let him stay there until he is

(1) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Abū Yūsuf, p. 315.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5356/).

ready to return to his country."[1] He also gave instructions to accommodate pilgrims observing the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage and to care for their weak and poor.[2]

Spending on Freeing Captives:

After spending on the poor and needy, the weak, and wayfarers, 'Umar allocated spending on freeing captives. The officer of charitable disbursements in the African province said: "'Umar commissioned me to the office of charitable disbursements in the African province and so I occupied it. Having appealed to the people in order to give to the poor, we did not find any and so spent the funds on freeing captives and returning them to the Muslims."[3]

We have already mentioned how 'Umar allocated some of the State's budget to providing stipends for scholars to enable them to fully commit themselves to the task of preaching and teaching. In fact, 'Umar extended spending to all sections of society, included children to help with their education. He also took the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* in society into consideration by spending on their poor and needy from the funds of the *Bayt*

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(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [The History of Ṭabarī] extracted from *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 94.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 65.

(3) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 94.

al-Māl.[1] It is necessary to point out that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's guided policy contributed to the prosperity of a large number of Muslims whose wealth increased through trade, agriculture, and so on. In effect, this advanced the religious spirit and love for the *Ākhirah* (Hereafter) within the people who desire to perform better and carry out more good deeds in pursuit of pleasing Allāh and seeking His Favour. Like so, spending was increased in the way of Allāh to help the poor and needy, widows, to construct wells and vital public structures, build mosques, and so on. All of this relaxed the financial strain on the *Bayt al-Māl* of the Muslims in the capital and its vast territories.

The Rationalisation of Expenditure in the Interests of the State:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policy in the area of spending was founded on the principle of economic integrity or what might otherwise be regarded as safeguarding spending and preventing wastefulness, excessiveness or on the other extreme, frugality.[2] The following are the measures 'Umar employed to ensure integrity in the field of spending in the interests of the State:

- Cutting the Special Privileges of the Caliph and Umayyad Royals:

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 9596-.
(2) *Ibid*, p. 96.

'Umar restored assets and private rights extorted by the Umayyads to their true owners as well as the rights of the public to the *Bayt al-Māl*. He started with himself and the members of his family, as we already mentioned, whereby 'Umar did not take anything from the *Bayt al-Māl* for himself. It would be said to him: "Just take what 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb used to take", but he would respond by saying: "'Umar had no money whereas my money makes me rich."(1) Upon assuming the caliphate following the death of Sulaymān, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was presented with the royal carriage, although 'Umar humbly requested his mule in its place and ordered that the carriage with all its decorative fittings be deposited into the *Bayt al-Māl*. It had also been the customary practice for the successive caliph to receive the inheritance of his predecessor and to take possession of his royal garb, use his perfumes, and so on. However, with 'Umar's accession to the caliphate, he said: "This neither belongs to me nor Sulaymān nor you (lot). O Mazāḥim! Put it all in the *Bayt al-Māl* of the Muslims."(2)

In no way whatsoever did 'Umar spend public funds on his own personal needs. He was once sent two clusters of dates by the Governor of Jordan that were delivered via a

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(1) *Al-'Aqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Creed] (5/22); *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 97.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 35; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 97.

courier on horseback. However, 'Umar gave instructions for them to be sold and for fodder to be bought to feed the animal with the money they yielded therefrom.[(1)] On another occasion, 'Umar asked his official to buy honey for him and so he had it delivered to 'Umar on horseback. In return, 'Umar ordered the honey to be sold and its yield to be deposited in the *Bayt al-Māl,* saying to his official: "You have spoiled your honey for us."[(2)]

- *Rationalising Administrative Expenditure:*

'Umar sought to attune his aides and governors to be economical with the Muslims' funds. Thus, when the Governor of al-Madīnah asked 'Umar to spend money on candles for him, 'Umar replied: "I swear, O Ibn Umm Ḥazm, when I assigned you to office, you would leave your house on a dark winter's night without a lamp and, I swear, you were better than you are today even though your family have enough wicks to make you rich."[(3)] Having also requested writing paper, 'Umar wrote back: "Once you have read my letter, use less ink, shorten the gaps between your lines and make your words more concise so that they fit on one page, for I certainly hate to exhaust the Muslims' funds on what is of no direct

(1) *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 98.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 210.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 64.

benefit to them."[1] 'Umar was undeniably scrupulous when it came to spending public funds and directing his governors to make optimal use of State resources even down to the amount of paper officials would use to write to him.

- Rationalizing Military Expenditure:

The Umayyad State had entered into external and internal wars that bore heavily on the State's funds, especially the campaign of Constantinople during the reign of Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik that exhausted vast amounts of funds and soldiers to no avail. Not long after 'Umar's accession to the caliphate, he wrote to Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, the Commander-in-Chief of the campaign, to withdraw with his army that had become severely constrained. 'Umar's conduct and attitude towards leadership led to the stabilization of internal affairs and the cessation of wars and *Fitan* (trials; discord). Even when 'the Kharijites knew of Umar's reputation, they convened together and said: "We ought not to wage war against this man."[2] The end of the wars and *Fitan* contributed to creating an overall atmosphere of peace and contentment and, in turn, the newly established stability contributed to the economic growth of the State and an improvement in the living conditions of the vulnerable poorer classes, firstly by the Grace of Allāh, and next, due to 'Umar's virtuous policy.

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5595/).

(2) *Ibid*, p. 86; *As-Siyāsah al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Māliyyah li-'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Economic and Fiscal Policy of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Bashīr Kamāl 'Ābidīn, p. 100.

Part XI

The Legislative System during the Reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and Some of its Jurisprudential Rulings:

Jurisdictions and Testimonies -

1. The Personal Characteristics of a Judge:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would scrutinize diligently [the candidates] during the appointment and selection of judges in order to prevent the people from being burdened with a judge who would come down on them counter to the truth. For that very reason, 'Umar stipulated five criteria a judge must fulfill before assuming the Office of Justice. These were: knowledge, discernment, integrity, the seeking of advice and tenaciousness in the truth.(1) Mazāḥim bin Zafar

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2285/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

is reported to have said: "I approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in the company of an envoy comprised of the people of Kūfah and we enquired from him about our country, governor and judge. Afterwards, he said: "There are five things that disgrace a judge if he makes a mistake in any one of them. He should be intelligent, discerning, chaste, tenacious and conscious of seeking advice on matters he has no knowledge in."[1] Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "A judge should not be a judge unless he possesses five characteristics: chaste, discerning, knowledgeable of the *Sunnah* and its applications, able to seek advice on opinions and indifferent to people's censuring."[2] In other words, he was repeating the words of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb[3] and 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib[4] (may Allāh be pleased with them) and, in turn, one might also say that the four imāms (i.e. Rightly-Guided Caliphs) would have held the view that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz possessed all these qualities and more. [5]

2. The Judge's Ruling on Clear Matters and Referral of Unclear Matters:

Naturally, there are those problematic cases that might perplex the judge and so in that case, is it appropriate for the

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5369/).
(2) *Ibid* (5370-369/).
(3) *Muṣannaf f* by 'Abd ar-Razzāq (8299/); *Shadharaāt adh-Dhahab* (1120/).
(4) *Al-Ma'nā* (39/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2485/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.
(5) *Ḥashiyyah Ibn 'Ābidīn* (4305/); Rawḍah *aṭ-Ṭālibīn* (1197-95/); *Jawāhir al-Iklīl* (2221/); *al-Ma'nā* (950 ,43-39/).

judge to pass a ruling when the truth is not apparent to him or should he refer it to someone who is more knowledgeable than him? 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz resolved that it was a mandatory procedure in judging for the judge to pass a verdict based on the truth should the truth appear apparent to him, otherwise the case should not be dismissed but referred to his superior to look into it.(1) It is reported that Maymūn bin Mahrān wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz complaining about the austerity of the judiciary and tax collection system, as the two offices fell under the same jurisdiction, and so 'Umar wrote to the judge, saying: "Indeed, I did not charge you to perform what you find distressful; I require goodness. Hence, judge matters that are obvious and if they appear ambiguous to you, refer them to me. Verily, when things become too heavy for the people they abandon them and neither religious nor worldly matters are observed."(2) The point here is that Allāh did not endow people with knowledge and understanding equally, rather there are various grades and levels. The role of the judge who is entrusted to arbitrate between the people is to apply the truth in those matters that are clear to him but if a case troubles him, it is his responsibility to seek advice from the people of knowledge in his country. In the event that they do not possess the knowledge he requires, the case should then be referred to someone more knowledgeable than him in order that it might be judged with proper knowledge.(3)

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2487/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Abī Yūsuf, pp. 2401-.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz]

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had an intellectual committee that was set up as a point of reference for scholars, jurists and anyone enquiring about religious or world matters. In fact, ‘Umar would disturb his time of his rest at night in order to collect facts and attain a deeper understanding so much so that when Rajā’ bin Ḥaywah said to him: “O *Amīr al-Mu’minīn!* You whole day is preoccupied and you are here talking with us at this hour of the night. Do you not feel tired?” ‘Umar replied: “O Rajā’! Do not say that! I believed that when men meet together it means that their hearts are actually brought closer together in harmony and, verily, consultation and debate are the doors of mercy and keys of blessing by means of which one’s opinion does not go astray and certainty is achieved.[1] I find that the meeting of men is a way of fertilizing and pollinating their hearts.”[2]

3. Attention to Temper and Forbidding Punishment whilst in a State of Anger:

‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote: “From the slave of Allāh, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the *Amīr al-Mu’minīn,* to the Commander-in-Chiefs. To proceed: if you are empowered

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(2488/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr ‘Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 186; *Sīrat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Biography of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 124.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz] by Dr ‘Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 186.

with authority over the people you should remember the power of Allāh over you and the temporariness of what you give to them. Also, you should know that whatever you give to them will not affect them forever and will not last; it will only affect you. You should remember that Allāh, the Exalted, has taken from the oppressor and given to the oppressed. Thus, no matter how long and how much you oppress people, you will not be able to oppress those who are victorious over you through their firm faith in Allāh, the Exalted."

He also said: "The winner is the one who forbids himself from sins of the eye, hypocrisy, anger and greed." Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī wrote to 'Umar: "Do not hit anyone as a result of your anger even if it was just one blow, for you will go to Hell." If 'Umar ever wanted to punish a person, he would imprison him for three days then punish him due to having an aversion for punishing anyone at the outset of his anger."(1) If punishment is sentenced at the time of anger, it may be supposed that the judge encroached on the truth under the influence of anger and wronged the culprit. For fear of using excessive punishment, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered the judge to imprison the culprit until he no longer felt any anger and then to judge him once he has regained his composure in accordance with the offense.(2)

(1) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, p. 236.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2490/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

4. For the Governor to Pardon Mistakenly is better than For Him to be Excessive in Punishing:

Abī 'Uqbah narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Try as much as you can to maintain and protect your borders from all types of blemish, for it is much better for a governor to be mistaken in his forgiveness rather than being harsh in his punishment."(1)

5. Averting from Doing Something due to Suspicion:

'Umar appointed al-Walīd bin Hishām al-Mu'ītī

6. Giving Gifts to the Heir:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz regarded presenting the heir to the caliphate, State governors, judges, and so on, with gifts as a form of bribery and as a result he strictly prohibited the practices by ordering the people not to offer any gifts and the governors not to accept any.(2) Furāt bin Muslim is reported to have said: "'Umar desired an apple and said: 'If only we had an apple that was sweet in smell and taste'. At that point a man from his family stood up and sent him an apple as a

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 123; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2491/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2495/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr

gift but when the messenger arrived with it, 'Umar said: 'How lovely its smell is! Take it back, O boy, and send greetings of peace on so-and-so and say to him that his gift has been received by us as he had wished'. I said: "*O Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* He is your paternal cousin and a man belonging to your own family, while you know that the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to eat from the gifts he was given and not accept charity." 'Umar retorted: "Woe unto you! No doubt, those were presents for the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but for me this will be bribery."(1)

7. Revoking Rulings that Contradict Islāmic Legal Texts:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to revoke any contradictory rulings that had been imposed on the people(2) on the premise that all rulings incongruous with the Book of Allāh, the *Sunnah* or *Ijmā'* (Consensus of the Scholars) should be rejected. The three *Imāms*, Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad assert that he elapsed all rulings inconsistent with the Book, *Sunnah* and '*Ijmā'*.(3)

8. Whoever Loses Something He has been

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 197.

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (5270/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2499/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

Entrusted with Must Take an Oath against Carelessness:

Wahb bin Munnabih wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "I have lost some money belonging to the *Bayt al-Māl* in the Yemen." 'Umar wrote back: "I am not accusing your religion or your trustworthiness but I do accuse you of carelessness and negligence. Verily, I am the registrar of the Muslims' money and so I must demand an oath from you; hence, swear on their behalf. Peace."[1]

9. The Effect of the Absence of Evidence on the Postponement of Judgment:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was a person before whom the Quraysh would put their arguments and so he would judge between them. The accused once said: "May Allāh make you more pious! There is an absence of evidence against me!" 'Umar therefore said: "I shall postpone judgment so that I grant him his right; therefore, you get out from here but if clear evidence is put forth to me that testifies to the truth over your rights then I shall be the first person to repeal it."[2]

10. The Cost of the Lost Camel:

Ash-Sha'abī is reported to have said: "A man lost a camel and later found it with a man who had spent money on it, fed it

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 104, 105.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5386/).

and fattened it and so the two men took their dispute to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz who was then the Governor of al-Madīnah. The outcome of the case ruled that the owner take back his camel and cover the costs of what had been spent on it."[1]

11. Freeing the Foundling:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to the people of Makkah declaring the foundling a freeperson.[2]

12. The Testimony of a Man on behalf of His Brother or Father:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "Permit the testimony of a man on behalf of his brother or father provided that he is upright."[3]

Blood and Qiṣāṣ (Legal Penalty of Equality) –

1. Giving Parties Whose Pacts have been Contravened on Account of Death the Option of Forgiveness, Blood Money or Death:

Regarding the case of a woman who had killed a man, 'Umar wrote: "If the loyal parties want to show

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(1) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (6312/).

(2) *Ibid* (6531/).

(3) *Ibid* (83-342/).

forgiveness then forgive, if they want to kill then kill and if they want blood money then take blood money and give his wife her share of the blood money."[1]

2. Adjournment until the Deceased's Benefactor Reaches Maturity:

In the case of a murdered man who had a young son, 'Umar wrote that it should be put off until the boy reached the age of maturity.[2]

3. Pardoning Some Parties Overturns Retaliation:

Az-Zuhrī wrote: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz also wrote that if one of the parties forgives then pay the blood money."[3]

4. Killing After Having Taken Blood-Money:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Wrongdoing is that which Allāh mentions with regard to a man wilfully exacting legal punishment and the authority ruling between the defendant and the victim, but then takes revenge even after it has already been settled. Whoever does this in violation of the agreement and he should be put to trial and sentenced to punishment accordingly. If

(1) *Al-Maḥlā* [The Adorned] (10361/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (211/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.
(2) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (1011/).
(3) *Ibid* (9318/).

he is excused, it is not for anyone to demand his right to be pardoned after he has transgressed except by the permission of the ruling authority. In that case, everything goes in that direction, as we have been informed of this matter in Allāh's Words: "*And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allāh and his Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, if you believe in Allāh and the Last Day.*" (*An-Nisā'*, 4:59] There is no minimum or maximum injury that cannot be settled by paying blood-money.(1)

5. *The Murdered Person Found in the Marketplace:*

'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, the Judge of Baṣrah, wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "I found someone who had been murdered in the butchers' market." So 'Umar wrote back: "As for the murdered person, pay his blood money from the *Bayt al-Māl*."(2)

6. *Killing due to Over-Crowdedness:*

If a person is killed due to over-crowdedness and it is not known whether he was murdered because of the large crowds, has he been killed in vain? It was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's opinion that death by over-crowdedness should be compensated in the form of paying blood money from the

(1) *Ibid* (1017 ,16/).
(2) *Ibid* (9459/).

Bayt al-Māl.[1] Concerning two men who had been killed in crowds, 'Umar wrote: "Pay out money for both of them from the *Bayt al-Māl* only if they were killed by hand or foot."[2]

Diyyah (Blood-Money) –

1. The Amount of Blood-Money:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to the Commanders-in-Chief to inform them that the blood money used to amount to one hundred camels during the time of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).[3]

2. Blood-Money Expiable on the Tongue:

Sulaymān bin Mūsā is reported to have said that in a letter of correspondence to the Commanders-in-Chief, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote: "If cutting off the tongue results in a complete hindrance of speech then the total amount of blood money should be paid, otherwise it should be calculated accordingly."[4]

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(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (236/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Al-Maḥlā* [The Adorned] (10418/).

(3) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (9128/).

(4) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (9357/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (266/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

3. Blood-Money Expiable on the Voice and Throat:

Since the throat is the origin of the voice, its impairment leads to losing the voice and hence a hindrance of speech. Because of this, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh be pleased with him) believed that the total amount of blood money should be paid out if the voice is lost owing to injury.(1) It is reported that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "If the throat is cut, the voice is lost; therefore pay the total amount of blood money."(2)

4. Blood-Money Expiable on the Groin:

As for the groin, its importance is vital to the man, as if it is cut off then his lusts and ability to reproduce cease. For that reason, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz declared that if it is completely severed, the total amount of blood money should be paid, otherwise it should be calculated according to the severity of the injury.(3)

5. Blood-Money Expiable on the Female Genitals:

If a man harms a woman by injuring her female genitals, this might result in preventing her from feeling any

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (269/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (9170/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (269/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (9372/).

pleasurable sensations or having sexual intercourse, which might consequently lead to her inability to get married or bear children. In consideration of such high risks, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the view that the full blood money should be exacted for this crime, while another report maintains that he stipulated a third of the blood-money.[1] It could possibly be that 'Umar stipulated blood-money to be paid in full in cases where the woman could no longer have sexual intercourse or reproduce and a third of the full amount in other cases.[2]

6. Blood-Money Expiable on the Nose:

Based on the obvious function the nose plays in breathing and smelling, it is additionally a feature of the face's beauty, which is one reason why the Arabs used to mutilate it with the intention of causing humiliation. 'Umar therefore made it so that blood-money would have to be paid in full if the victim's nose was amputated from the base, otherwise the amount would need to be calculated accordingly.[3]

7. Blood-Money Expiable on the Ear:

Given that the ear constitutes one half in facilitating hearing and because all humans are supposed to have two ears, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz affirmed that if an ear is severed

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (271/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (9377/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (276/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

or hearing is lost in one, half of the blood-money should be paid, where half applies to severing or losing hearing in each ear.(1)

8. Blood-Money Expiable on the Leg:

Since humans are not able to walk except on two legs and because a person is crippled with just one, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz set a price of half the blood money per leg.(2)

9. Blood-Money Expiable on the Area between the Eyes:

There are some specifics concerning blood-money in terms of quantity, nature and other related affairs that had not been elaborated on by the scholars before 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. In these areas, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz expressed his opinion and with reference to harm afflicted between the eyes and deforming the face (not relating to the bones),(3) he stipulated a quarter of the blood money should be paid.(4)

10. Blood-Money Expiable on the Forehead if Dented:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "Concerning the forehead, if

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(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (280/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (9209/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (288/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(4) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (9320/).

its gets struck and dented, one hundred and fifty *dinar* may be exacted."(1)

11. Blood-Money Expiable on the Chin:

For a broken jaw or chin, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz specified a third of the blood money should be exacted.(2) 'Umar thereby applied his own independent judgment and opinion to matter with no precedence by concluding a third of the blood-money should be paid for a broken chin having taken into consideration that one in rendered incapable of chewing food and opening one's mouth in that state. It seems that no other opinion has been passed on this subject.(3)

12. Blood-Money Expiable on Fingers and Toes:

Due to the importance of the fingers and toes, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the opinion that a tenth of the blood money should be paid per finger or toe and a third for every joint or knuckle, except the thumb as that only has two joints, in which case half per joint should be paid. Accordingly, 'Umar said: "For every finger or toe pay ten camels or equal to that in gold or money."(4)

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(1) *Ibid* (9291/).

(2) *Ibid* (9361/); *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (9179/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (296/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(4) *Ibid* (2100/).

13. Blood-Money Expiable on Nails:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz did not overlook so much as the finger and toe nails, in respect to which he specified a tenth of the blood money exacted per finger or toe should the nail turn black or fall out due to injury, i.e. ten *Dīnār* per finger or toe nail.(1)

Ḥudūd (Fixed Punishments) –

1. The Importance of Upholding the Ḥudūd:

The purpose of the *Ḥudūd* is to protect the blood, wealth and honour of the Muslims and maintain peace and stability in their lands. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz laid great emphasis on upholding the penal laws of the *Ḥudūd* so much so that he likened the importance of doing so to upholding the *Ṣalāt* (Prayer) and *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms).(2) Thus, he wrote: "In my view, upholding the *Ḥudūd* is the same as upholding the *Ṣalāt* and *Zakāt*."(3)

2. Disallowing Retracting the Ḥudūd after the Imām has Given a Verdict:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ruled that once questions of *Ḥudūd* had been raised to the Imām or judge and a penalty verdict

(1) *Ibid* (2/103).
(2) *Ibid* (2111/).
(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5113/).

had been passed, it was not then possible to retract it; on the contrary, such verdicts must be enforced in keeping with *Ḥudūd* laws.[1]

3. Multiple Ḥudūd Charges Against One Man:

If a man is indictable of multiple *Ḥudūd* charges, such as adultery, theft and murder, is the murder penalty (i.e. capital punishment by execution) sufficient punishment for him or should he be made to undergo the penalties for the other crimes and then be executed? One narration confirms that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ruled that the offender should undergo the lesser punishments before being put to death.[2]

4. No Amputation or Crucifixion without the Caliph's Consent:

It was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's opinion that governors are required to consult the Caliph in cases involving amputation or crucifixion and hence not execute anyone through these means without the Caliph's consent.[3]

5. The One Indicted with a False Accusation of Zinā' (Illegal Sexual Intercourse) Must

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2113/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Ibid* (2117/).

(3) *Ibid* (2120/); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm

be Muslim:

'Umar held the view that a *Kāfir* (Disbeliever) could not be charged for a false accusation of *Zinā'* under *Ḥudūd* Penal Law for the reason that *Kufr* (Disbelief) is punishable beyond the prescribed punishment for falsely accusing someone of *Zinā'*. Hence, there is no need to vindicate someone of this sin when they are committing the greatest sin of *Kufr*.(1) Ṭāriq bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān and Muṭarraf bin Ṭarīf are reported to have said: "We were in the presence of ash-Sha'abi when two men were presented to him: a Muslim and a Christian. Each of them falsely accused the other of *Zinā'*, after which the Christian flogged the Muslim eighty times. However, the Muslim then said to the Christian: "What you have is worse than this penalty" and left him. Ash-Sha'abi consequently raised the case to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin Zayd who referred it to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. In his reply, 'Umar wrote that ash-Sha'abi should improve his line of reasoning, given that 'Umar held the view that there was no *Ḥudūd* penalty for a *Kāfir* who falsely accuses someone of *Zinā'*, since no sin can exceed *Kufr* (Disbelief) and because a *Kāfir*'s punishment for *Kufr* is more indictable than any other.(2) Even if he was flogged for his false accusation, that would be a lesser crime than *Kufr* for which no *Ḥudūd* punishment is prescribed.(3)

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2130/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (61-130/7) (5-64/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2130/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

6. On Waiving a Father's False Accusation of Zinā' Against His Son:

If a man falsely accuses his son of a committing *Zinā'*, is the father punishable under *Hudūd* law or not? Does a father have the right to falsely accuse his son of *Zinā'* when he has not? If the father is guilty of falsely accusing his son, can his punishment be waived if the son chooses to forgive him? 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the opinion that a father who wrongly accuses his son of *Zinā'* should be punished except if the son chooses to forgive his father, in which case it should not been carried out.[1] It is reported that Ibn Jurayḥ said: "Razīq informed me that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote with regards to a man who accused his son of a crime. He said that the man should be punished under *Hudūd* penal law except if his son chooses to forgive him."[2]

7. On Falsely Accusing a Christian Woman Who is Married to a Muslim Man:

If a Christian woman is married to a Muslim man, it is considered that falsely accusing her of *Zinā'* infringes on her Muslim husband or her Muslim son. For that reason, 'Umar flogged whoever falsely accused a Christian woman of a *Zinā'* under *Ḥudūd* law.[3] It is reported by Abī Isḥāq ash-

(1) *Ibid* (2133/).
(2) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (9504/).
(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2136/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

Shaybānī that a man falsely accused a Christian woman who had a Muslim son of *Zinā'* because of which 'Umar flogged the accuser more than thirty lashes.[1] 'Umar's view on this is in accordance with that of az-Zahrī.[2] Similarly, al-Qatādah agreed that he should be flogged.[3]

8. On a Woman Accusing a Man of Coercing Her:

It is reported that a woman approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and said: "So and so coerced me to him." So 'Umar said: "Did anyone see or hear you?" She replied: "No", upon which he flogged her instead of the man.[4] This is not exact the punishment for *Zinā'* (Adultery; Fornication), as she was the only one who alleged it. Regarding a woman who therefore claims that a man coerced her to commit *Zinā'*, the claim is looked at as a claim against herself that necessitates punishment in its own right, except if clear evidence is presented in her favour. Having heard that nobody had heard or seen what the woman accused the man of doing, 'Umar conceded that she should be flogged. Az-Zuhrī, Rabī'ah and Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd al-Anṣārī are also of the same opinion as this.[5]

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(1) *Ibid* (2133/).

(2) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (7130/).

(3) *Ibid* (7130-129/).

(4) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2140/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(5) *Al-Maḥlā* (112-291/).

9. On Amputation for Theft before the Thief Sets Out to Commit Theft:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the opinion that the hands or feet of a thief should not be amputated until he has committed the crime. It is reported that he said: "Do not administer amputation until the property has been taken out of the house."(1)

10. A Thief Who Desecrates a Grave Deserves Amputation:

There are some people who stoop to such abhorrent levels that even the dead are not safe from them in their graves, such as a thief who desecrates a grave with the intention of stealing the shroud of the dead person. For such a person, 'Umar considered amputation a fitting punishment, since stealing from the dead is the same as stealing from the living.(2) Mu'ammar narrated: "I was informed that 'Umar administered amputation on the grave-desecrator."(3)

11. The Punishment of a Second-Time Offender of Drinking Alcohol:

'Ibādah bin Nasī is reported to have said: "I witnessed 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz flog a man for drinking alcohol under

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(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2146/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Ibid* (2147/).

(3) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (1034/).

Hūdūd law. He removed his clothes and then flogged him eighty lashes, some of which cut into him and some of which did not. Afterwards, he said: 'If you repeat the offense, I shall flog you again then imprison you until you are reformed." The man said in return: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* I repent unto Allāh that I should never return to this again!' 'Umar then left him alone."(1)

12. The Punishment of the Alcohol Server:

Whoever supplies or offers out alcohol though does not drink it should not receive a lesser punishment than the one who drinks it, for the reason that he was the one who allowed the consumer to drink it in the first place. In view of that, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) flogged alcohol vendors along with those who consumed it.(2) Ibn at-Tamīmī narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz found a group of people drinking and among them was a person serving the alcohol. As a result, 'Umar flogged the one serving the alcohol along with the others.(3)

13. Destroying Alcohol Containers as well as Alcohol:

Hārūn bin Muḥammad reported that his father said: "I saw

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5365/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2157/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2159/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (9230/).

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz in Khanasser (the city of Anasartha located in western Syria) ordering all skins containing alcohol to be ripped and all flasks to be smashed."[1]

14. On Non-Muslims Taking Alcohol into Muslim Countries:

For non-Muslims who believe that alcohol is permissible to drink and therefore enter into Muslim countries with it in their possession, is that considered lawful? Are they allowed to distribute and consume it in Muslim countries? The answer is that as long as non-Muslims want to live alongside the Muslims, they are expected to abstain from alcohol. It is the duty of every country to regulate and control alcohol trafficking and given this system is governed by the Islāmic State, that is, the system of the Lord of the Worlds, then that has the greatest right to be observed and complied with. Based on this logic, we see that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz forbade the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) from entering Muslim countries with alcohol in their possession. During his caliphate, 'Umar wrote: "Do not allow the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* to enter into the Muslim cities carrying alcohol."[2]

15. The Punishment of the Sāḥir (Magician; Practiser of Magic):

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5365/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2164/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

Hamām narrated from Yaḥyā that the Officer of Oman wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz regarding a *Sāḥirah* (female practiser of magic; witch) who he had arrested. 'Umar wrote back: "If she confesses or there is clear evidence against her then put her to death."[(1)] This is the view of the three Imāms: Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and Aḥmad.[(2)] During his caliphate, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb had written to the governors to kill every male and female practiser of magic.[(3)]

16. On Requesting the Apostate to Repent:

Muslims do not compel anyone to accept Islām but they also do not accept anyone manipulating it. Therefore with regards to those who enter into Islām willingly and obediently or are born into Islām but then renounce their belief after having believed, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz gave them a period of three days in which he requested them to repent and return to Islām. If they did it was accepted from them or otherwise they were sentenced to death.[(4)]

17. On the Method of Requesting an Apostate to Repent:

'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Thābit bin Thawbān narrated that his father said: "I was an officer to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and

(1) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (10135/).
(2) *Ḥāshiyah* by Ibn 'Ābidīn (131/); *al-Ma'anā* (8153/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2176/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.
(3) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (10136/).
(4) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5351/); *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (10171/).

wrote to him about a Jewish man who had accepted Islām but then returned to Judaism and so rejected Islām. 'Umar wrote back: 'Invite him to Islām and if he accepts it then let him be on his way but if he refuses then lay him down on a plank of wood and call him to it once again. If he still rejects Islām, tie him to the wood, put a spear to chest and call him to Islām once again. Even at that point, if he accepts it, let him be on his way'."[1] Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr says: "I have not come across any statement other than 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's detailing the method of requesting an apostate to repent. The four Imāms hold the view that if an apostate refuses to accept after having been requested to repent and return to Islām, he should be killed."[2]

18. The Punishment of the Female Apostate:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz believed in giving female apostates from Islām the chance to repent and return to the Religion, otherwise he would they should be captured and sold to people other than those belonging to their religion.[3] This was also the opinion of al-Qatādah who said to "take prisoner and sell" and it was also what Abū Bakr did with women apostates.[4] It is narrated that Al-Ḥasan said: "Do not sentence woman apostates from Islām to death but invite them to it and if they still reject, take them captive and make

(1) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (12274/).
(2) Rawḍah *aṭ-Ṭālibīn* (1075/); *Ḥāshiyah* by Ibn 'Ābidīn (3289/).
(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2181/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr
(4) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (10176/).

them the bondswomen of the Muslims without killing any of them."[1]

Ta'zīrāt (Corporal Punishments) -

1. The Maximum Corporal Punishment for Flogging:

The punishment of flogging falls under two categories: *Ḥadd* (singular of *Ḥudūd*) and *Ta'zīr* (singular of *Ta'zīrāt*). The punishment for *Hadd* offenses are fixed by the Qur'ān or *Ḥadīth* under Islāmic Law, however, *Ta'zīr* refers to punishments applied to other offenses for which no punishment is specified in the Qur'ān. These are often the equivalent of misdemeanour offenses. They could also be applied to *Ḥadd* offenses in situations where the standards of proof required for *Ḥudūd* punishments could not be met due to their strict nature. The general rule is that no *Ta'zīr* punishment can exceed that of a *Ḥadd* penalty. *Ta'zīrāt* can be administered at the discretion of the judge, as opposed to the *Ḥudūd*. As for the punishment of *Ta'zīr* flogging, this is applied in cases that do not specify the *Ḥadd* penalty and are therefore left to the discretion of the judge to determine the severity of the offense. Importantly, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz set the maximum limit that could not be exceeded in administering the *Ta'zīr*. Firstly, it is not permissible to exceed thirty lashes, as Muḥammad bin Qays narrated that 'Umar wrote to his Officer in Egypt, saying: "Do not allow punishment to exceed

(1) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (10140/).

thirty lashes except in administering the *Hudūd* penal law of Allāh."[1] Secondly, 'Umar asserted: "The *Ta'zīr* punishment for flogging cannot exceed the lowest *Hadd* penalty." According to this rule, a free person cannot be flogged more that thirty-nine lashes and a slave no more than nineteen, given that the lowest *Ḥadd* penalty for a free person is forty and twenty for a slave.[2] 'Umar wrote to his officers: "Punish the people in line with their offenses and if that exceeds a single lash then you should beware of subjecting anyone to a punishment greater than the *Ḥudūd* of Allāh."[3]

2. Forbidding Punishing People on Account of Suspicion and Flogging Them Based on Accusation:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz considered it unlawful to punish someone on account of suspicion or flog them based on mere accusation. Thus, 'Umar determined this principle of justice and strove diligently to ensure that justice was realised for fear that the innocent might be oppressed. In that sense, 'Umar preferred to face Allāh with their treachery to answer to rather than their blood.[4] Ibrāhīm bin Hishām bin Yaḥyā al-Ghasānī narrated that his father informed him that his

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5365/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2182/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 117.

(4) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2212/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

grandfather said: "When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz appointed me over Moṣul, I went there to find that robbery and pillaging were rifer there than anywhere else I had ever seen. I consequently wrote to 'Umar to inform him of the state of the country and ask him about punishing people on account of suspicion and flogging them based on accusation, as well as punishing them on account of proof and in accordance with what has been the custom of the people. Accordingly, 'Umar wrote back instructing me to punish people on account of clear proof and in accordance with the *Sunnah,* saying that if they are not bettered by the truth, Allāh will not better them. So I did exactly that and I did not leave Moṣul except that it had become one of the most righteous countries with the lowest rate of theft and robbery."(1)

'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah wrote the following letter to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "May Allāh make the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* more pious! A large number of officials have illicitly extorted the money of Allāh, the Majestic, and the sum of that money is so vast that I cannot begin to hope to retrieve it without employing some kind of punishment against them. If it is the opinion of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* – may Allāh make you more pious – to allow me to do that then I shall." 'Umar replied: "It is strange beyond belief that you would ask my permission to punish human beings, as if I could act as a shield for you from punishment or as if my satisfaction with you could save you from Allāh's displeasure. Seek out proof and take back

(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (5271/); *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 1178-.

what you have proof for. If anyone admits to taking something then take that back too. However, if someone denies having taken money, get him to take an oath in Allāh's Name then let him be on his way and resort to Allāh. Verily, meeting Allāh with their treachery to answer to is more preferable for me than to meet Him with their blood to answer to."[1] Based on this understanding, 'Umar chose to be fair and honest in relation to administering punishment instead of resolute and tough. Everything that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said about not punishing on account of suspicion and not flogging based on mere accusation was taken from 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him).[2]

3. Prohibiting Muthlah (Deformation):

Allāh made shaving the head an act of piety and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) – on the *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* pilgrimages – while the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade shaving the beard. In spite of this, some people completely contradict this by making shaving the beard and head a form of punishment. This is what 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz forbade and termed *Muthlah*.[3] 'Umar wrote to his one of his officers: "Beware of shaving of the beard and head, it

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 55.

(2) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (10219-217/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2213/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2215/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

is a *Muthlah*."[1] According to the four Imāms of the schools of thought, it is not permissible to administer *Ta'zīr* (Corporal Punishment) for shaving the beard and for not shaving the head in the view of Mālik and Abī Ḥanīfah.[2]

Rulings on Prisoners:

1. Expediting the Cases of the Accused:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered promptness in relation to the affairs of accused persons. In keeping with this, whoever required discipline had to undergo a disciplinary before he could be released and whoever did not have a definite case against them was let go. 'Umar believed that maintaining *Ḥudūd* penal law would bring about a lack of prisoners, as it was meant as a deterrent against immorality and maliciousness.[3] Ja'far bin Burqān is reported to have said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to us: "I have ordered you to uphold the *Ḥudūd* penal law in order to reduce the number of prisoners, scare the perpetrators of immorality and prostitution and to put a stop to the crimes they commit. The number of prisoners will only increase if their cases fail to be addressed, while it is meant to be imprisonment and not an investigation. In that case, command all your governors to look into the cases of prisoners on a daily basis so that

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5380/).

(2) *Mughni al-Muḥtāj* (4194/); *Jawāhir al-Iklīl* (2225/).

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2225/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

whoever needs a disciplinary action can be released on those grounds and whoever's case had not been established can be let go."[1]

2. Concern for the Affairs of Prisoners:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz embarked on reform in every respect and exacted justice at every level. He showed a deep interest in the affairs of prisoners and issued instructions to provide them with all their basic needs with regard to food, clothing and so on.[2] Ja'far bin Burqān is reported to have said: "Spend from the charity fund on them until their basic needs are met and give them a monthly allowance to spend. Whenever bread is taken round to them, let the prison wardens do so in the company of guards and officers." Thus, every prisoner was given a monthly stipend and proper seasonal clothing. 'Umar further advised the jail authorities to inculcate love for virtue and hatred for vice among the prisoners. Education of the prisoners led to their reform. He also said: "If a prisoner dies with no known heir or relative, wash his body and shroud him at the expense of the *Bayt al-Māl* (Punic Treasury), offer the prayer over him and bury him."[3] He wrote to the Commanders in-Chief: "Put those who observe the truth in charge of the prisons …do not continue to administer punishment, give medical care to those who have

(1) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Abī Yūsuf p. 301; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2225/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2226/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Al-Kharāj* [Land Tax] by Abī Yūsuf p. 3001-.

no relatives or money...seek out those who can be trusted in your prisons and who do not receive bribes, as whoever receives a bribe has done what he orders himself."[1]

3. *Women's Only Prisons:*

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz went to great lengths to organise the prisons and prison systems and showed a genuine concern for prisoners and their rights. One of his prison reforms was to designate separate wings within the prisons exclusively for women, away from mixing with the men. He also took measures to ensure that those who assumed office in the prisons were righteous and trustworthy people.[2] On this matter, he wrote to the Commanders-in-Chief: "Seek out those who are righteous to assume office within the prisons and do not allow them to do so unless they adhere to the truth and can be trusted among the immoral inmates; indeed, prison is a warning example for them. Do not repeatedly administer punishment, give medical care to those who have no relatives or money, do not mix people of religion with immoral people in one cell and put women in a prison of their own. Put those who are not corruptible and do not accept bribes in charge of the prisons."[3] It can be noticed from the prison reforms made by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that he was ardent in establishing justice and rectifying the corrupt practices that had been put

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5356/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2228/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5356/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2228/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

in place by those who preceded him in dealing with prisoners.

Rulings on Jihād (Fighting in the Way of Allāh) -

1. The Legal Age of Those Eligible to Participate in Battle:

The youth of the first squadron of Muslim troops would compete and contend with each other over participating in battle and whoever was not allowed to take part would feel regret and attempt to persuade the person in charge to let him fight. This is the reason why 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz specified the age of those who were permitted to fight by making fighting compulsory from the age of fifteen. Anyone below that age was considered a minor and therefore not eligible to take part in any fighting.[1]

2. On How to Commence Fighting Against Non-Muslims:

Ṣafwān bin 'Amr narrated: "We received a letter from 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz when he was Caliph which was addressed to his officer. It read: 'Do not launch an attack on any Byzantine fortress or against any of their people until you have called them to accept Islām. If they accept, withdraw your army from them but if they reject then levy the *Jizyah*

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2415/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(Tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) on them. However, if they still refuse (to pay the *Jizyah*) then wage war against them indiscriminately'."[1]

3. The Duration of Ribāṭ (Fortified Outpost):

Undertaking *Ribāṭ* (Fortified outpost", i.e. holding fast to outposts of the Islāmic lands in order to protect the Muslims therein) is one of the most beloved deeds in the Sight of Allāh for which a great deal of reward is a granted. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz held the view that the duration of *Ribāṭ* was forty days, saying: "The completion of *Ribāṭ* is forty days."[2]

4. Ruling on the Money of the Combatant Fighting on Horse-Back:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "If a man is at war fighting on horse-back and therefore does not make money, that is permissible."[3]

5. On Selling Horses to the Enemy:

The sale of weapons and arms, horses or whatever might be used to strengthen the enemy and advance their position over the Muslims is a crime on the part of the person who

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5355/).

(2) *Ibid* (5355/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2427/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5352/).

does it and such things as these should be restricted by law in order to prevent them from falling into the possession of the enemy. In light of that, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz prohibited transporting horses to India for the reason that it was a county belonging to the *Mushrikīn* (Idolaters; Polytheists) during his reign and enmity is not hidden between the people of Islām and the people of *Shirk* (Idolatry; associating partners in worship with Allāh).[1]

6. Ransoming Muslim Captives Irrespective of Price:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz stressed the necessity of freeing Muslim captives in his correspondences to his officials whatever the cost. He went as far as instructing some of his officials to ransom Muslim captives even if that meant exhausting all funds.[2] Rabī'ah bin 'Aṭā' narrated that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz handed over ten Byzantine male captives in exchange for one Muslim male.[3] Another narrations states 'Umar ordered all Muslim captives to be ransomed even if that meant spending all funds."[4]

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2427/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* [The Beauty of the Righteous and Ranks of the Elite] (52-311/).

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5354/).

(4) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 120.

7. Ransoming Men, Women, Slaves and Ahl adh-Dhimmah:

Rabī' bin 'Aṭā' is reported to have said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote and sent money to the shores of Aden to ransom the men, women, slaves and *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule)."[1] That 'Umar paid the ransoms of any subjects living on Muslim land, even slaves and non-Muslims, is a clear manifestation of his abounding justice, as he considered it his responsibility to protect, defend and ransom those taken into captivity. This also serves as proof that the loyalty of the Muslims in fulfilling their duties is greater than one could ever imagine.[2]

8. Despising Killing Captives:

Mu'ammar is reported to have said: "A man from Shām (the Levant) who used to guard 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz told me that he never saw 'Umar kill a captive other than one of the Turks. Concerning that, the man said: "Some Turk captives were brought and so 'Umar ordered that they be enslaved. At that point, a man from among them said: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* If only you had seen this man – referring to one of the Turks – when he was fighting against the numbers! You would certainly cry over them!' So 'Umar said: 'Here you are then, I shall kill him!' And he went up to the man and

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5353/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2436/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

killed him'."[1] Nevertheless, 'Umar hated to kill captives and refrained from doing so, except in that one case of the man who had killed many Muslims. He did, however, allow for them to be enslaved.[2]

On Marriage and Divorce –

1. A Woman Marrying Without a Legal Guardian:

Sufyān narrated from a man from people of al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) on the authority of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that a woman got married whilst her legal guardian was away on his post on the passages of Byzantium. 'Umar therefore rejected the marriage and said: "No marriage except with a guardian and the ruler is the guardian of the one who has no guardian."[3]

2. Two Guardians Marrying a Woman to Two Men:

Thābit bin Qays al-Ghafārī is reported to have said: "I wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz regarding a slave-girl from

(1) *Muṣannaf 'Abd ar-Razzāq* (56-205/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2438/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (4132/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (2405/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

Juhaynah whose guardian had married her to a man from Qays while another guardian had married her to a man from Juhaynah. 'Umar wrote back: 'Let a witness enter upon her and ask her to choose between the two. Whichever man she chooses is her husband'."

3. A Man's Marriage to a Woman after Having Sexual Intercourse with Her:

If a man fornicates with a woman and then marries her, is that permissible under Islāmic law? 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz held the view that it was permissible provided that she appeared to be a good person. This is wise opinion due to the fact that it closes many evil doors, as there is no difference between the one who slept with her and the one who has not. If we were to say it was impermissible, it would then be unacceptable for that man to marry her and she would have to marry someone else, which could lead to a great deal of corruption and vice.[1] Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd is reported to have said: "I was informed that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was asked whether it is permissible for a man to marry a woman who had committed an offense but was then seen to be good, 'Umar answered: 'It is as I have heard it, i.e. he can marry her'."[2]

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(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1412/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (4250/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1412/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

4. Marrying the Wife of a Captive:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz is reported to have said: "Never marry the wife of a captive as long as he remains in captivity."[1] The Muslim captive ended up in captivity as a result of his quest and bravery in fighting against the enemy in order to raise the banner of Islām, or defend the Muslim lands. It is therefore out of acknowledgment of this noble status for sacrificing himself in the way of his religion that his wife should honour him and remain patient until Allāh frees him from his captivity and returns him to her, especially as his absence was not out of choice. Also, his release could occur at any given time, which is why it is only fair and just that it is not permissible to marry the wife of a captive as long as he remains in captivity.[2]

5. Marrying the Wife of a Missing Person:

If a man goes missing and nothing is heard from him such that it is not known whether he is alive or dead, should his wife have to wait for him? If so, how long must she wait? 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the opinion that the wife of missing man must observe a waiting period of four years, after which she may marry.[3] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah, saying: "The wife of a missing man observes a waiting

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5351/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1417/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Ibid* (1418/).

period of four years."[1] It is clear that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz considered it permissible to marry the wife of a missing man after a period of four years and the *'Iddah* (period of waiting a woman must observe following the death of her spouse or divorce) after that is four months and ten days.[2]

6. The Dowry of the Divorcee during Her Husband's Illness:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz held the view that she gets half of the dowry, as divorcing her husband while he is in a state of sickness is of no effect.[3] 'Umar is reported to have said: "She gets half of the dowry, no inheritance and there is no *'iddah* required of her."[4]

7. A Man Stipulating Something for Himself on the Occasion of His Daughter's Marriage:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the opinion that the marriage dowry belonged to the bride and if her father stipulates something for himself then it belongs to the bride and not the father.[5] Al-Awzā'ī narrated that a man married

(1) *Al-Maḥlā* [10138/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1418/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1423/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(4) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (4332-331/).

(5) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz]

off his daughter for a thousand *Dīnār* and requested a further thousand *Dīnār* for himself. As a result, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz ruled that the bride receive two thousand *Dīnār* and the father receive nothing."[1]

8. Playing Around with Divorce is Serious:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz regarded divorce as effective whether it was declared seriously or jokingly. Sulaymān bin Ḥabīb al-Maḥāribī is reported to have said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to me, saying: 'Divorce will be effective whether it is said in jest or not'."[2]

9. Divorcing Forcedly:

Some people reach the stage where they feel forced to get divorced, such as in the case of a man who swears to a divorce, to do such and such a thing, leave, etc. because he would feel restricted and threatened if he were not to divorce his wife. Is this type of divorce counted? 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz held that divorcing reluctantly is not effective,[3] saying: "There is no divorce done forcedly."[4]

(1425/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(1) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (4201/).

(2) *Ibid* (553/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1441/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1434/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(4) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (449/).

10. A Man Half-Declaring His Wife Divorced:

It was said to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz: "The man half-declared his wife divorced." 'Umar replied: "It is a declaration of divorce."(1)

11. A Woman Divorcing Herself when the Command is Placed in Her Hands:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz maintained that divorce which occurs in this way and if done irrevocably only counts as one declaration of divorce, meaning that the man still has the right to take her back if he wants. 'A man from the Banī Tamīn placed the command of divorce in his wife's hands, and she divorced herself, so 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: 'If she had refused it would not have counted but if she divorced herself then it counts as one declaration and he still has the right to her."(2)

12. A Woman Submitting to Islām when Married to a Kāfir:

If a woman who is married to a *Kāfir* (Non-Muslim; Disbeliever) submits to Islām, she must leave him and they must separate. Mu'ammar bin Sulaymān narrated from his father that Al-Ḥasan and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz both said concerning a married Christian woman who submits to Islām:

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(1) *Ibid* (553/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1441/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah* (557/).

"Islām removes her from him."[1] Therefore, when a woman submits to Islām but her husband remains a non-believer, it is necessary for them separate in order that a *Kāfir* man does not have authority over a Muslim woman, as this is unacceptable under Islāmic law. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was of the view that a woman who submits to Islām while married to a *Kāfir* man must leave him and they must separate.[2] This separation does not occur except once Islām has been presented to him, which if he accepts, she is still his wife, but if he refuses to submit, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz considered that his evident divorce of her.[3] If he later embraces Islām while she is still in her *'Iddah* (period of waiting after divorce), he has the most right to her.[4]

13. The Period of Absence from One's Wife:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz specified the maximum period of absence as being two years. After that, the absent husband must either return to his wife or divorce her. He wrote: "Whoever is absent from his wife for two years must either divorce her or return to her."[5]

The above independent rulings deduced by 'Umar bin 'Abd

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(1) *Ibid* (590/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1450/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz] (1450/) by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr.

(3) *Ibid* (1451/).

(4) *Ibid* (1452/).

(5) *Ibid* (1455/).

al-'Azīz pertain to juristic and legal matters as he practiced them and thereby serve to illustrate the vast wealth of his knowledge in these areas and his proficiency in deriving legal rulings from the Book of Allāh, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and scholars who preceded him. A work entitled *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] has been compiled as a PhD thesis submitted to the Higher Institution of *Sharī'ah* Law in Riyādh, Saudi Arabia, by Dr Muḥammad Shaqīr in two volumes for further reference.

Part VIII

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administrative Jurisprudence

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Most Prominent Governors:

For 'Umar's policy of cultivation and honest dealing with the people, he chose righteous, trustworthy governors renowned for their piety, knowledge, strength, humility, chastity, just conduct, good nature, mercy, fine example, consultation of others, selflessness, proficiency, intelligence and wisdom. Commenting on 'Umar's governors, Ibn Kathīr says: "Many of the imams declare everyone who was employed by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as trustworthy."(1) Some of these governors include:

1. Al-Ḥajjāj bin 'Abdullah al-Ḥakmī (Governor of Khorasān and Sajistān):

In reference to him, adh-Dhahabi says: "Army Major and Cavalier of the Battalions, Abū 'Uqbah, al-Jarāḥ bin 'Abdullah

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 270.

al-Ḥakmī, was the Governor of Baṣrah on the part of al-Ḥajjāj and then the Governor of Khorasān and Sajistān for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz . He was fearlessly heroic, a devout worshipper, reciter of the Qur'ān and a person of great distinction.(1) Al-Jarāḥ al-Ḥakmī said: "I forsook sins out of modesty for forty years and then I became conscious of piety."(2) He was in charge of all jurisdictions in Khorasān, namely, war, prayer and finance.(3) He died in the year 112 AH during the caliphate of Hishām. Sulaym bin 'Āmir reported: "As I entered upon al-Jarāḥ, he raised his hands and so the officials raised theirs. After a long period of silence, he then said to me: 'O Abī Yaḥyā! Do you realise what we were doing?' I answered: 'No. I found you requesting something so I raised my hands with you'. So he said: 'We asked Allāh for the *Shāhādah* (Conviction of Faith). By Allāh! Not a single person who took part in those military expeditions left until they were martyred."(4) Khalīfah says: "Al-Jarāḥ advanced from Bardha'ah (a district in Azerbaijan) in the year 112 against Ibn Khāqā whereupon they engaged an intense battle in which al-Jarāh was killed in the month of Ramadhān. The army crossed the Caspian Sea from Azerbaijan and almost reached Moṣul.(5) The tragedy of al-Jarāḥ's death deeply wounded the Muslims, so much so

(1) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5189/).
(2) *Ibid* (5190/).
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid* (5190/).
(5) *Ibid.*

that every soldier mourned him.[(1)]

2. 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah al-Fazārī (Governor of Baṣrah):

He was the Governor of Baṣrah under 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's administration. According to 'Amr bin 'Absah and Abī Amāmah, 'Ibād bin Manṣūr said: "'Udayy addressed us from the *Minbar* (pulpit) of the city and everyone cried, which made us cry."[(2)] 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would look to him for advice and preaching." Mu'ammar said: "'Umar wrote to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah: 'Indeed, you have beguiled me with your black turban and circle of reciters. You have also shown me every grace possible and for that I think very highly of you. Allāh reveals whatever secrets you were keeping. Are you not walking among the graves?"[(3)] When 'Udayy arrived in Baṣrah, he put Yazīd bin al-Muhallab in chains and led him to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, but when 'Umar died, Yazīd escaped and began to make claims to the caliphate for himself, calling himself al-Qaḥṭānī (a legendary ancestor of the South Arabians) and raising black banners. He proclaimed: "I call to the way of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb!" Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik consequently waged war against him and killed him. In 112 AH, Yazīd's son, Mu'āwiyah, led an ambush that resulted in the death of 'Udayy and a group of his associates.[(4)]

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid* (553/).
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid.*

3. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Zayd bin al-Khaṭṭāb (Governor of Kūfah):

The trustworthy and just Imām, Abū'Umar al-'Adwī al-Khaṭābī al-Madanī, was assigned to the Office of Governor of Kūfah by 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. Not much has been narrated on him but it said that he was a person of distinction. He died in 115 AH.[1]

4. 'Umar bin Habīrah (Governor of Upper Mesopotamia):

He was shrewd and brave. Originally from Shām (the Levant), 'Umar appointed him over al-Jazīrah (Upper Mesopotamia) in 100 AH from where he led a successful invasion against the Byzantine Empire via Armenia that resulted in his victory over them and a large number of captives. He continued to assume governorship over al-Jazīra up until Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik's caliphate, whereafter he was put in charge of 'Irāq and Khorasān. He was later dismissed by Hishām in place of Khālid al-Qasrī who put him chains, dressed him in a gown and imprisoned him. However, he was rescued by his servant boys who helped him to escape and so he sought refuge with Governor Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik who granted it accordingly. He died shortly afterwards in 107 AH.[2]

(1) *Ibid* (5149/).
(2) *Ibid* (4562/).

5. Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm (Governor of al-Madīnah):

He was an acclaimed, reliable scholar and the Governor of al-Madīnah and then he assumed the office of Judge of al-Madīnah, concerning which it is said that he was one of the most knowledgeable judges of his time. He narrated traditions from his father, 'Ibād bin Tamīm, Salmān al-Agharr, his maternal aunt, 'Amrah bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, and a number of his peers belonging to the offspring of the *Tābi'īn*.[1] 'Aṭāf bin Khālid narrated from his mother that the wife of Ibn Ḥazm said that he had not reclined on his bed for forty years.[2] It is said that his maintenance over three months amounted to one hundred *Dīnār*.[3]

6. 'Abd al-'Azīz bin 'Abdullah bin Asyad al-Umawī (Governor of Makkah):

'Umar instated 'Abd al-'Azīz bin 'Abdullah al-Umawi over Makkah, who had also been the Governor under Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik. He is considered reliable by an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Ḥabān. He died during the caliphate of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik.[4]

(1) *Ibid* (5314/).

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalīfah's History] (323); *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 273

7. Rifā'ah bin Khālid bin Thābit al-Fahmi (Governor of Egypt):

Ibn Taghrī Bardī solely relates that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz instated 'Abd al-Mālik bin Rifā'ah bin Khālid bin Thābit al-Fahmī al-Maṣrī to the office of Governor of Egypt. He had a good reputation, was disdainful of money, virtuous, just towards his subjects and al-Layth bin Sa'ad as well as others narrated traditions from him. He was then dismissed by 'Umar in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal in 119 AH, although the reason for his doing so is not given.(1) Ayūb bin Sharḥabīl bin Aksūm bin Abrahah bin aṣ-Ṣabāḥ was appointed in his place.(2)

8. Ismā'īl bin 'Ubaydullah bin Abī al-Muhājir al-Makhzūmī (Governor of al-Maghrib [the western region of North Africa]):

He was a righteous and virtuous ascetic and it is said that he arrived in Africa in 99 or 100 AH. He had an upstanding reputation with the people who he treated with truth and integrity and as a result many of the indigenous Berbers accepted Islām through him. He was eager about the people's submission to Islām and 'Umar would write letters to him calling the *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule) to enter into Islām and he would subsequently read them out to them. Ismā'īl bin 'Ubaydullah died in 132 AH.

(1) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 289.

(2) *Ibid.*

9. As-Samḥ bin Mālik (Governor of Andalus [Spain]):

He was the famous governor who 'Umar instated over the Iberian Peninsula called al-Andalus, upon which he commanded him to distinguish its territories and to take the *Khums* (Fifth of the War Booty) from whatever was conquered by force. He also asked him to write to him describing the land of Andalus. Thus, as-Samḥ entered Andalus in 100 AH and did as 'Umar had instructed. He was martyred whilst invading France.(1)

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Insistence on Selecting His Officials from the People of Righteousness and Virtue:

The Caliph's officials and State governors are ideally the Caliph's representatives in their regions and intermediaries between him and his subjects. Whatever the Caliph's level of political knowledge may be, he cannot realise success except through paying close attention when choosing his officials. For that very reason, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz paid meticulous attention when it came to choosing his officials and governors and if we follow his efforts in this respect, we find that he had his own special criteria that had to be met before allowing anyone to represent him. The most important criteria were: *Taqwā* (God-consciousness), loyalty and

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 271.

religiousness. When he dismissed Khālid bin ar-Rayyān from his post as Chief Bodyguard during the reign of al-Walīd bin Sulaymān, 'Umar looked in the face of the guard and then summoned 'Amr bin al-Muhājir al-Anṣārī to whom he said: "By Allāh, O Amr, you should know that there is no relationship between you and I except for Islām. However, I hear that you are a copious reciter of the Qur'ān and I have seen you praying in places where you thought nobody could see you and I saw that you pray beautifully. Take this sword, for I have appointed you as my guard."(1) He would also write to his officials: "Beware of entrusting anything to do with our affairs to other than people of the Qur'ān and even if there appears to be no good from the people of the Qur'ān, then certainly others would be worse and would have nothing good about them."(2)

If 'Umar ever doubted anyone he was intending to instate to a position of authority, he would not go ahead with his appointment until he verified his character. Following 'Umar's assumption of the caliphate, Bilāl bin Abī Bardah, arrived in a delegation before him and said: "While the caliphate honoured others – O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* – you have honoured the caliphate and while it beautified others, you have beautified it" and he went on to sing his praises in poetic verse, upon which 'Umar therefore rewarded him generously. Afterwards, Bilāl stayed

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 31.

(2) *Ibid,* p. 8; *Sirāj al-Mulūk* [The Lamp of the Kings] by aṭ-Ṭarṭushī, p. 255.

in the *Masjid* (mosque) and performed prayers and spent his days and night reciting the Qur'ān, which made 'Umar consider appointing him over 'Irāq, saying: "There is virtue in this man." However, 'Umar first sent one of trusted confidantes to put Bilāl to the test by saying to Bilāl: "If I can get you appointed over 'Irāq, what will you give me?" In return, Bilāl guaranteed him a large amount of money and so when 'Umar was informed of that, he immediately discarded him."[1]

'Umar had an open aversion to the appointment of anyone who indulged in error or wrought injustice, especially al-Ḥajjāj.[2] Prior to 'Umar, tribalism and kinship to the house of the Umayyads had been the decisive factors in assuming office, whereas 'Umar attached weight to nothing of the sort. Al-Awzā'ī tells of how 'Umar was sitting in his house and in his company were a number of notables from the house of Umayyad. 'Umar said: "Would you like me to appoint every one of you as a soldier?" One man asked: "Do you offer us money for doing it?" 'Umar answered: "Do you see this carpet of mine? I have no knowledge of how it spoils but I hate that I should defile it with your feet, therefore how could I appoint you over my religion and over the Muslims to govern between them? How preposterous! How outrageous!"[3]

The consequence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's policy in

(1) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] extracted from *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 182.

(2) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 182.

(3) *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (5132/).

relation to choosing his officials was the effect it had on the political stability of the different regions wherein people felt pleased with his manner of conduct and commended his efforts. One thing that is for sure is that none of his officials came close to resembling al-Ḥajjāj in his harsh treatment and exploitation of the people. In addition, 'Umar's officials did not practice tribalism by choosing some people over others that might cause people to have a personal grudge against him.[1]

Notables Directly in Charge of Managing State Affairs

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz personally oversaw the execution of State affairs, however big or small, and he would go out to his officials designated to the various regions in order to aid them in managing those that had been developed by 'Abd al-Mālik bin Marwān, such as the Board of Posts and the Intelligence Services that extended to all areas of the State. Despite the care 'Umar took in selecting his governors, this did not stop him from monitoring the people's affairs and execution of State matters. He had become so renowned for his diligence in this respect that his slogan became "Do not delay today's work until tomorrow." As a result, it was said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Since you have mounted your horse, go home." He remarked: "And who will serve that day's work instead of me?" It was said: "You can do it tomorrow." He replied: "One day's work weighs upon me, so I will I be

(1) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 183.

able to manage two day's work at once?"(1) Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "One night, I was up late conversing with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and I said to him: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* What keeps you here? You spent all day attending to the people's needs and affairs and you are here with us now. Allāh knows best that you do not abandon them."(2) Thus, 'Umar would spend a lot time drafting reform policies that encompassed all areas of life, such as economic policy, administrative policy and so on, to the extent that he left behind a colossal number of reformational policies that influenced the entire system of government.

That 'Umar directed his policies at his officials for implementation as well as preaching and reminding them of the great responsibility and trust that had been accorded to them proved more effective in shaping his officials than the whip is certainly true. One incident of this can be seen in the case of 'Umar's official who resigned and went into seclusion following admonition from him.(3) 'Umar had written to him saying: "O brother! I would like to remind you of the long lasting nights spent awake for eternity by the people of Hell. Be careful not to forget that and to deviate from Allāh, as that would be your last covenant and the end of all hope." Upon reading that from 'Umar, his official made immediate

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 55.

(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5371/).

(3) *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 186.

tracks across the land to see him and so 'Umar asked: "What brings you here?" He answered: "Your letter has completely plucked out my heart. I shall never go back to being governor again until I meet with Allāh, the Exalted."[(1)] Merely directing these policies at his officials was not enough for 'Umar who would take steps to oversee their proper application and materialisation in relation to his subjects. Accordingly, he would not refrain from asking questions to those who arrived in his presence about such matters, for example, when Ziyād bin Ziyād al-Madanī arrived from al-Madīnah, he said: "'Umar asked me about the condition of the men and women of al-Madīnah and how affairs were being dealt with there and so I informed him."[(2)] One day, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and Mazāḥīm mounted their horses and set out to inspect the condition of the towns, as they were in the habit of doing, upon which they encountered a horseman from al-Madīnah and so they asked about the people he had just left. He said to them: "If you want, I can tell you everything that I know or else I can just tell you bits." They said: "Tell us everything." So he went on: "Indeed, I left al-Madīnah in a state in which oppressors are defeated, the oppressed are victorious, the rich are plentiful and families are well-maintained." 'Umar consequently rejoiced at receiving such news and said: "By Allāh! For every city to be as you have just described is more beloved to me than the rising of the sun upon them!"[(3)]

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Ibid*, p. 187.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 115.

A man from Khorasān who wanted to go back to his country once went to 'Umar and requested that he allow him to work as his postal courier, so upon composing himself 'Umar said to him: "Do you want to work for us and for me to entrust you with something?" The man replied in the affirmative, so 'Umar said: "Nobody works for us unless I have seen the way he conducts himself. If I find him good then I inscribe him and if it is not then I do not." Mazāḥim said: "After that we did not hear from him and so he was not sent to Khorasān."[1] Here, we notice that 'Umar was concerned with gathering all types of information in order to obtain the precise details and an accurate picture of the affairs of his subjects and governors. His close attention to detail was not without its fruits in the form of stabilising the regions' conditions and keeping the officials and governors in a constant state of readiness to apply the directives they received. Ibrāhīm bin Ja'far narrated that his father said: "I saw Abū Bakr bin Muḥammad bin 'Amr working day and night to assure 'Umar of him."[2]

Similarly, 'Umar would delegate inspectors to examine the provinces and report back to him. He sent three inspectors to Khorasān to investigate into abuses committed against the people within the tax system. He also decided to instate 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah over 'Irāq where he also sent an inspector to report

(1) *Tārīkh Damashq* [The History of Damascus] taken from *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 188.
(2) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5347/); *Athar al-'Ulamā' fil-Ḥayāt as-Siyāsiyyah* [The Influence of Scholars in Political Life], p. 188.

back to him on its governors and citizens.[1] 'Umar had openly publicised what we might term his general monitoring of the State and its affairs, such as when he wrote to the pilgrims observing the *Mawsim* (Season", i.e. the *Hajj* Pilgrimage) on the biggest day of the *Ḥajj,* saying: "Verily, I am free of the wrongs that have been carried out by those who oppress you. I am the guardian of every oppressed person and I do not permit any of my workers to go against the truth. Whoever does not act by the Book and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), you are not required to obey him. Whoever does some good in the way of reformation for the sake of Allāh, specifically or generally, he shall receive between one hundred to two hundred *Dīnār* based on the work that he has done."[2] This announcement was thereby made to the largest Muslim gathering possible whereupon he materially and morally encouraged the monitoring of his agents and officials and speaking out against those who did comply with the Qur'ān and *Sunnah.* Naturally, the Islāmic *Ummah* does not require anything other than the teachings of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah,* which achieve the desired aim when adhered to properly.[3]

(1) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by az-Zaḥilī, p. 90.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 90.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 431.

Planning in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administration:

Planning is generally defined as "the process of creating and maintaining a plan, as well as thinking about the activities required to create a desired goal of some sort."(1) Planning can also be defined as "the bridge between the present and the future." Based on this general understanding of it, then, it is possible for us to say that planning in Islām is "preparing in the present for what a person faces in his or her work or life in the future."(2) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would not have taken any decision without some form of planning and consideration of the consequences and outcomes. Perhaps one of the main indictors determining the importance 'Umar accorded to planning and contemplating matters is his statement to Rajā' when he said: "O Rajā! I have a mind and reason that I fear Allāh might punish me for."(3) 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would first depend on Allāh then gather information to the best of his ability to anticipate the future and achieve the desired goals. On that matter, 'Umar would say: "Whoever acts without knowledge causes more corruption than good."(4)

In the area of planning, 'Umar would set goals and policies, determine the measures, and crystallise the actions in his plan. In the area of bringing together goals, there was the

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(1) *Al-Idārah* (Management] by al-Munīf, p. 147.

(2) *Al-Idārah fil-Islām* [Management in Islām] by aḍ-Ḍaḥiyāt, p. 71.

(3) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 266.

(4) *Ibid*, p. 250.

main goal that 'Umar strived to achieve, specifically, guided reforms and revival on the Prophetic path. Thus, he aimed for a guided caliphate and addressed every variable pertaining to this project of reform in the form of maintaining justice and truth, removing injustice, and re-establishing harmony between people and life and the universe, and between them and their Creator in the framework of a comprehensive understanding of Islām.

When it came to the selection of policies, as one of the variables of planning, this came to view in 'Umar's applications of his administrative plan. That is not to suggest that 'Umar was content with the Holy Qur'ān and *Sunnah* with no willingness to listen to any discourse on religious and legal matters, as he was ultimately the ruler and executor of the law on himself and his subjects in ensuring that was applied and adhered to properly.[1] Of course, this pertains to determining and choosing general policies. As for defining measures, which is also one of the variables of planning, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz set the criteria for the measures he would use to execute his politics from the very onset of his caliphate with his first encounter with the *Ummah,* which we have already looked at in earlier chapters.

As for the methods he would adopt in his endeavours, he clarified that he was executor and not an innovator, i.e. an

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 397.

executor of the teachings of Islām and obedience to those who obey Allāh.[1] The basis of any action taken by 'Umar was the maintenance of justice, reformation and excellence as opposed to injustice, insolence and hostility.[2] He had practiced his plan with completeness and his plan took care of every domain without leaving anything out. Thus, it covered politics, governing, judging, economics, education, social life, in addition to the planning of general affairs, such as giving special attention to the government institutions of Khorasān and Irāq, and so on.[3]

Organisation in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz's Administration:

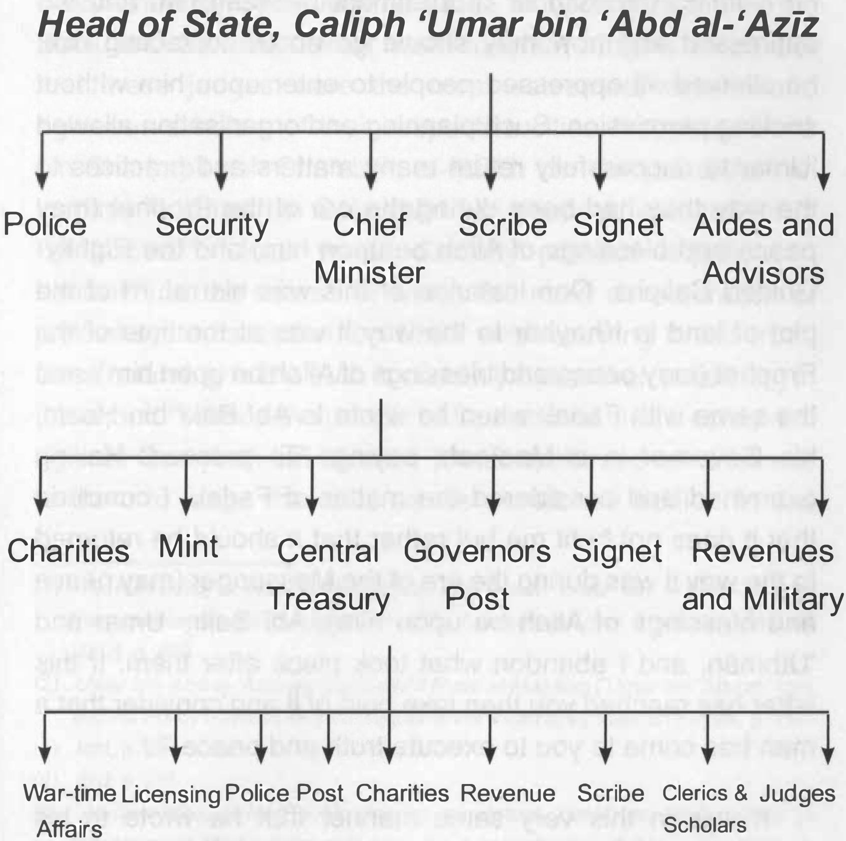
Organisation complements planning in forming the measures required to execute plans. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made organisation one of the most important priorities of administrative work as well as entrenching the concept of organisation in his own administrative conduct. In terms of the type of structured organisation 'Umar applied, we find that he divided the roles of the State into four main divisions that fell under the responsibility of four trustees: the Governor, Judge, Treasurer of the *Bayt al-Māl* (Public Treasury) and

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 356-.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 102.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 400.

Caliph,[1] in addition to other Boards like *al- Kharāj* (Board of Revenue), *al-Jund* (Board of Military), *ash-Shurṭah wal-Ḥaras* (Police and Security), *Ṣāḥib al-Khātim* (Signet) and so on. Below is a tree structure illustrating the organisation of responsibilities that formed part of the Caliph's administration during the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz:[2]



(1) *Ibid*, p. 401.
(2) *Ibid*.

On matters pertaining to the formalities and relationships between the Caliph and governors, officials and agents, the designation of directives and the mode of execution, it is possible to say that much of what 'Umar wrote to his delegates was intended at realising this goal and clarifying this aspect of the administrative process. By way of example, he clarified the manner of treatment between him and the oppressed and how they should go about contacting him; he allowed all oppressed people to enter upon him without seeking permission. Such planning and organisation allowed 'Umar to successfully return many matters and practices to the way they had been during the era of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. One instance of this was his return of the plot of land in Khaybar to the way it was at the time of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the same with Fadak when he wrote to Abī Bakr bin Ḥazm, his Governor in al-Madīnah, saying: "To proceed: Having examined and considered the matter of Fadak, I conclude that it does not befit me but rather that it should be returned to the way it was during the era of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abī Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and I abandon what took place after them. If this letter has reached you then take hold of it and consider that a man has come to you to execute truth and peace."(1)

It was in this very same manner that he wrote to his

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5389/); *Umar was Siyāsatuhu fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* [Umar and His Policy on Redressing Grievances], p. 208.

officials in relation to the management of finance, charitable disbursements, taxes, *Zakāt* (Prescribed Alms) on wealth and properties, trade and tradesmen, and so forth. Likewise, he paid a keen interest in putting the affairs of the justice system in order in terms of solving the disputes of the people and protecting their rights. Every major city or administrative district had its own judge to judge in accordance with the Book and *Sunnah.* 'Umar went to great lengths to ensure that these judges were the most esteemed, erudite and righteous scholars of their respective cities,(1) such as 'Āmir bin Sharḥabīl ash-Sha'abī(2), al-Ḥārith bin Yamjad al-Ash'ari in Ḥimṣ,(3) 'Umar bin Sulaymān bin Khubayb al-Maḥāribī in Damascus.(4) 'Umar would similarly practice adjudication himself(5), in the course of which the main consideration of judicial systematization for 'Umar was returning to the truth, since returning to the truth is certainly better than persisting in falsehood.(6) When the people of Samarkand filed a complaint against Qutaybah bin Muslim, 'Umar appointed an arbitrator to them to judge the case as we mentioned earlier. In this

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 403.

(2) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 277.

(3) *Ibid,* p, 284.

(4) *Ibid,* p. 285.

(5) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 403.

(6) *Ibid,* p. 403.

incident, 'Umar recognized the fault of the authorities in dealing with the people of Samarkand iniquitously. As the Caliph of the Muslims, 'Umar was conscious not to allow his workers who represented him to act except in accordance to the law of Allāh. The judge in that case thereby ruled that the Arabs had to leave Samarkand given that their occupation of it was carried out illicitly.[(1)]

'Umar's application of this policy included the arrangement of the home of the caliphate in that he made numerous changes which conformed with his view on the way the caliph should live, that is, as a common Muslim who did not need, or should not have, the pageantry of kings. Since he was disdainful of the prevalent image that had become attached to the caliphate before him, he decided to terminate certain jobs, such as that of chief bodyguard meant for protecting the Caliph by standing in front of him with a spear wherever he went. Instead, 'Umar said to him: "Why do you protect me? I am just another man among the Muslims", then he walked away with the people.[(2)]

Safeguarding against Administrative Corruption during the Reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz

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(1) *Niẓam al-Ḥukm fī ash-Sharī'ah wa at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The System of Ruling in Islāmic Law and Islāmic History].

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 65.

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz endeavoured to ensure safety from administrative corruption by means of implementing ways to protect against it and obstruct the seepage of administrative poisons such as treachery, dishonesty, bribery, offering gifts to persons in charge and notables, governors and commanders dealing in trade, governors and commanders cutting the people and their affairs off from them, oppression, injustice, and so forth. The following deals with this in more detail:

1. Increasing the Wages of Officials:

The first administrative execution 'Umar sought to handle was protecting against treachery, which he did by means of increasing the wages of his officials in spite of the parsimony he showed towards himself and family. 'Umar's logic in doing this intended to free his officials from any need of treachery and so he enhanced their spending power by giving every man a monthly wage of one hundred *Dīnār* and two hundred *Dīnār* to those who made themselves available to tend to the affairs of the Muslims at all times. It was said to him: "Why do you not spend on your family what you spend on your officials?" He replied: "I neither deny them of any of their rights nor do I give them other than their rights." In fact, his family had to undergo severe hardship and make many sacrifices, for which he would apologise to them in advance.[1] Taking

(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 315.

this measure allowed 'Umar to accomplish two things:

- Obstruct the seepage of treachery by preventing his officials from feeling any need to be treacherous and steal the Muslims' money;
- Ensure that governors, officials and commanders were free to deal with the needs of the Muslims.(1)

2. *His Observance of Safeguarding Against Dishonesty:*

Maymūn bin Mahrān said: "I entered upon 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz as he was with his official who was in charge of Kūfah and he was furious at him, so I asked: 'What has he done, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn?'* He answered: 'I have been informed that he said: 'I do not find a false witness without cutting out his tongue'. So I said: 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, he did not really do that!' 'Umar therefore said: 'Look at this old man – the one who was being condemned – he is one of two levels and dishonesty is the better one of the two evils'."(2) By this, he meant that lying was one of the bad levels and this is why 'Umar strived to sever administrative corruption from the root by warning against the things that ensue from lying and trickery concerning decision-making.(3)

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 315.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 134.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A

3. Banning the Acceptance of Gifts and Offerings:

In response to the person who said: "Did the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) not accept gifts?" 'Umar answered: "Yes, but for us and those after us it would be bribery."(1) Thus, 'Umar nullified the tradition of taking gifts that had become customary for the Umayyad governors, particularly on the occasion of *Navruz* (Christian Coptic New Year) and festivals related to Persian celebrations. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz accordingly sent declarations banning the practice of taking gifts to his officials to be read before the people, as well as cautioning his officials and governors not to take anything that had been tendered to the Caliph for themselves or their families. This is what happened when Fatimah bint 'Abd al-Malik sent a message to Ibn Mu'adi Karab requesting some honey from Sinai of Lenanon, upon which he wrote to her: "Turn to Allah that you might acquire something of the sort, for I could never do such a thing and look you in the face."(2)

4. Prohibiting Wastefulness and Extrava-

Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 316.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 189.

(2) *Al-Ma'rifah wa at-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] by al-Baswī (1580/); *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 317.

gance:

'Umar took decisions in staunch favour of protecting the Muslims' money, the first of which was immediately after his accession to the caliphate when he did away with the whole grand facade. As the regal carriage was brought to him, he asked: "What is this?" It was said: "A carriage that is reserved solely for the Caliph's successor to the Caliphate", upon which 'Umar abandoned the custom and asked for his mule instead, saying: "O Mazahim (his slave)! Deposit this into the *Bayt al-Mal* of the Muslims." He was also granted pavilions and chambers that had never before been sat in by anyone other than the Caliph at the time his accession, though 'Umar said: "Add these to the Muslims' funds as well." He then rode off on his mule. When he saw the furniture and throne reserved for the new Caliph, he shoved some of the furniture with his leg and said: "And this too. Deposit it all in the *Bayt al-Mal*."(1)

Another measure 'Umar took to combat the extravagance of the State occurred when Maymn bin Mahran said to him as they were inspecting the condition of the people: "What is this fancy pen you are using to write on these scrolls in such an drawn-out way even though it belongs to the Muslims' *Bayt al-Mal*?" 'Umar therefore wrote to his officials instructing them not to write on scrolls or prolong their messages, saying: "Keep your letters to approximately a handbreadth."(2) We have

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 136.
(2) *Ibid,* p. 88.

already recollected his letter to Abi Bakr bin Muhammad bin Hazm al-Ansari, the Governor of al-Madinah, regarding the issue of the candles, after which he said to him: "In your reply to me, keep your message succinct and to the point, tighten up your lines and only use up one page, as the Muslims are not in need of longwinded messages that exhaust the funds of their *Bayt al-Mal*. Peace be upon you."[1]

It was down to the most minute details like those we have just related that Umar concerned himself with the Muslims' wealth, no matter how trivial or who it concerned. Not only was he stringent with his most prominent governors but he was the same with all of his officials, agents and aides. He endeavoured to economise spending from the *Bayt al-Mal* by remitting that which had been spent on luxury and lavishness.[2]

5. Prohibiting Governors and Officials from Trading:

In a letter 'Umar wrote to his official, he said: "We hold the view that a leader should not deal in trade and it is not permissible for any official to trade within the vicinity he is appointed over. In the event that he did deal in trade, he would dominate the market and weigh heavily on the flow

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 55.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 320.

of its affairs, which is why he must be sure not to do so."(1) 'Umar recognised that if officials and governors were to take their hands to commerce, one of two things, if not both, would naturally happen: either they would become too preoccupied with their businesses to attend to the affairs of the Muslims; or they would be treated favourably on account their statuses and be given rights that they were not entitled to that would disturb the harmony of the market. In view of this, 'Umar took precautionary action against these dangers for fear that they might lead to administrative corruption and many more negative repercussions.(2) Eight centuries later, Ibn Khaldn appeared on the scene and wrote in his great work entitled *al-Muqaddimah* [Introduction], after having conducted extensive research: "How true and completely wise was 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz when he said: 'Trade exercised by the authorities is harmful to citizens and problematic to the levying of taxes'."(3)

6. Opening up the Channels of Communication between Governors and Citizens:

The entourage of the Caliphs before the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz had served to bar people from accessing the Caliph, on top of which an iron fence had been erected so that he did not have to deal with any unwanted person or anyone

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 83.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaş min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 320.

(3) *Muqaddimah* [Introduction] by Ibn Khaldn, extracted from *Rijal al-Fikr wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Intellegence and Preaching] by an-Nadwa (146/).

who had not been granted permission to contact him by his entourage. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, on the other hand, offered awards and financial incentives to anyone who could provide him with information on the reality of current affairs or highlight anything that could be improved for the Muslims and State. He wrote to the people observing the *Mawsim* (*Hajj* season): "Any man who comes to us having rectified a grievance or to inform us of any specific or general affair that can be improved in the Way of Allāh shall receive a reward of one hundred to three hundred *Dinar* based on the work that he has done and the travel expenses he incurred to get here. Through him, Allāh might bring forth a truth or eradicate a falsity, and perhaps open up doors of good for him for doing so."(1)

Correspondingly, 'Umar ordered his governors and officials to vigilantly open up channels of communication between them and their subjects, to listen to what they had to say and understand their situations. Allowing such accessibility and openness was aimed at stopping oppression and affording people their right to ask for what they need without resorting to methods and means that have no legitimacy in or connection to Islām.(2)

7. Holding Former Governors to Account

(1) *Rijal al-Fikr wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Intellegence and Preaching] by an-Nadwa (147/).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 320.

over the Funds of the Bayt al-Māl:

After 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had assumed office, he issued a warrant of arrest for the Governor of Khorasān, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who 'Umar probed over the money that he had been bequeathed by Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik. Yazīd answered: "I held a special status with Sulaymān as you saw for yourself and he bequeathed it to me in private without the people's knowledge. I learned that Sulaymān did not record it down." 'Umar therefore said: "I find there is no other way to resolve this than your imprisonment. Fear Allāh and leave what you are incapable of accomplishing, for I cannot overlook the rights of the Muslims." 'Umar then sent him back to prison where he remained up until 'Umar fell ill.[1] Even in that state, 'Umar probed his governors, monitored their actions and held them accountable for their negligence, as he wrote to one them saying: "Many have complained about you and few have thanked you. So either be just or resign from your post. Peace."[2]

Centralisation and Decentralisation in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administration:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz adopted a principle that combined and struck a balance between centralisation and decentralisation in running the State. Depending on the situation, either of them would be applied according

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī (7462 ,461 ,460/).
(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār ash-Shaykh, p. 275.

to a fixed set of standards, which is clear from some of the measures 'Umar took in certain situations.

Centralisation:

A letter that he wrote to his official in Kūfah illustrates his application of centralisation, which reads: "Indeed, I appointed you to office having been vested with authority by Allāh. Do not hastily carry out any amputation or crucifixion without referring the case to me first."(1) In this instance, 'Umar gave preponderance to the welfare of the *Ummah* by enforcing centralisation in the use of the sword, since hastening to kill or crucify is of no benefit to the *Ummah* and reprisals will be handed out all in good time. Thus, 'Umar accorded greater weight to accomplishing justice over being hard-handed,(2) as of course, there is no matter more important than saving lives.(3) There are many general and specific examples demonstrating 'Umar's application of the principle of centralisation with regards to requiring his officials, governors and judges to consign to him before taking any course of action. Such cases largely relate to things that caused anguish to the *Ummah,* for which no precedence is given in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah.* 'Umar wrote to one of his officials to make his policy clear to him,

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 322.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 323.

(3) *Ibid.*

saying: "As for incidents that cause anguish to the *Ummah*, concerning which no ruling is given in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*, no action should be taken at one's own discretion and no verdict should be passed without obtaining the consent of the guardian of the Muslims and the leader of their general affairs."(1)

A centralised style of leadership was considered necessary in other domains, such as appointing more than one governor to Irāq, while Khorasān, Sajistān and Ammān were all directly linked to the Caliph. Similarly, a number of governors were appointed over al-Andalus (Spain) owing to his desire to afford special attention to its territories without adjoining it to the responsibilities of the Governor of the African administrative district.(2) In short, there is ample evidence proving that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz employed centralisation and necessitated the referral of cases to him.

Instances Demonstrating the Application of Decentralisation:

It has been narrated that 'Umar corresponded with 'Urwah bin Muḥammad, his governor in the Yemen, saying: "I write for the purpose of commanding you to settle the Muslims' grievances by referring them to me. You do not know how long you and I have left and you do not know when death shall strike.

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Hakm, p. 63.

(2) *Al-Idārah fī al-'Aṣr al-Umawī* [Administration in the Umayyad Era] by Najdah al-Khamās, p. 107.

Should I write to you concerning the return of sheep to a Muslim victim of extortion then I want it returned whether covered in dust or black. Henceforth, seek to settle the grievances of the Muslims even if you do not consult me on them."[1] The decision taken here illustrates the fine line between defining something as centralisation or decentralisation, as this shows that decentralisation was extended for the benefit of the *Ummah.*[2] Another case confirming that 'Umar wanted to adopt a policy of decentralisation can be seen in his letter to 'Udayy bin Arṭa'ah in which he says: "You are not to trouble any Muslim man (i.e. by tiring him out through sending him to 'Umar) by subjecting him to the extreme heat and cold of the desert climate. You ask me about the *Sunnah* as if are venerating me with it, while you should turn to Allāh to suffice you with Al-Ḥasan (i.e. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī). Therefore once this letter of mine has reached you, ask Al-Ḥasan on behalf of me, you and the Muslims."[3] 'Umar would opt for decentralisation and the non-referral of cases to him where routine affairs were concerned, so long as there was a reliable source of knowledge available, such as Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) who could answer the questions of the people.[4] In this situation, 'Umar respected and esteemed devout scholars like Al-Ḥasan and appropriately in favour of

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5381/).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 324.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 324; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (5307/).

(4) *Ibid*, p. 324.

whom he drew back his own standing. Observably, nations rise when their pious scholars are respected and accord them the stations they deserve.

'Umar practiced a steady balance between centralisation and decentralisation, and aptly, there were factors and criteria that prompted him to adopt one or the other, which can be summarised as follows:

1) The relevance of the situation or measure to general or specific welfare;

2) The importance of the matter for which centralisation or decentralisation must be determined. For measures pertaining to killing and crucifixion, for example, 'Umar deemed centralisation more befitting;

3) The advancement of matters that are not mentioned in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah* is afforded importance;

4) Consideration of the geographical distance between the Caliph and governors;

5) The presence of someone who he trusted, had confidence in and relied upon;

6) The effect on the speed and safety of accomplishing the task;

7) Consideration of having confidence in judges, governors

and officials.[1]

The Principle of Resilience in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administration:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz exercised resilience in the areas of understanding, dialogue, thinking, executing commands and abiding by them, which has been testified to by Maymūn bin Mahrān who narrated that 'Abd al-Mālik, the son of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, said: "O father! What prevents you from administering justice as you see fit? By Allāh, I would not care if I were put in chains if it enabled you to do what you want!" 'Umar remarked: "O son! It is only because managing the people is a complicated task. Of course I want to revive all just affairs and do that so adeptly that it eradicates the world's greed with it until the people have an aversion to it and feel alleviated of it."[2] And 'Umar said: "May the people obey me in what I want of the truth, even if that meant I could facilitate just one thing in this world for them."[3] 'Umar expressed this assertion from the onset of his accession to the caliphate, that is, that in order to achieve one's aims it is necessary to show some flexibility and fortitude. 'Umar's son had not evaluated the aforementioned situation correctly, given that he was not opposed to being put in chains in the way of realizing justice

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 326.

(2) *'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz* by 'Abd as-Sittār, p. 226.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 88.

due to his disregard for any other consideration.[1]

Another conversation involving 'Umar and his son 'Abd al-Mālik serves to highlight 'Umar's attitude in this sense. 'Abd al-Mālik once went to see his father and said: "O father! Do you think that it is right for you to go to sleep when there are grievances that you have not rectified? 'Umar responded: "O son, sit down. I am my own steed and if I do not show kindness to it then it will not respond to me. If I exhausted myself and my aides that would do little other than cause us to drop to the ground, although I do not assume that I gain the same reward in my sleep as I do when I am awake. Verily, Allāh, Glorified is He, did not send down the Qur'ān all at once but He sent it verse by verse to allow faith to penetrate the hearts. O son! There is a matter that is more important to me than the members of your family (the Umayyads) who are a people of strength and number who did what they did. If I tried to seek out all of their misdemeanors in one day, I fear that I would drown myself, and so I do right by one or two men each day while making sure to take care of it properly."[2]

The previous account conveys to us 'Umar's skilled understanding of legal matters in administering refomational changes and managing initiatives that aimed to bring down

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(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 328.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 106.

oppression and exploitation and spread justice and equality.(1) His statement: "If I exhausted myself and my aides that would do little other than cause us to drop to the ground" was aimed at explaining to his son that the capacity and strength of humans is limited and that a person's ability to endure harshness and intenseness has its own limits whereby one might be able to keep up with one's commitments when necessary, but soon enough those commitments turn into resented burdens until they strike a nerve and affect the entire body and blood of the person. In the event of that happening, that person collapses under the added pressure and feels like he cannot go on. On the other hand, this would not have happened if the human boundaries had not been exceeded and the commitments had been handled day by day.(2)

To draw attention to his statement: "I do right by one or two men each day while making sure to take care of it properly", here 'Umar is emphasizing the importance of fulfilling tasks and his role in achieving reform and renewal. Many of those who claim to be taking revolutionary action by tearing out rotten roots and planting new ones in reality do not last long before they collapse along with the principles they proposed. As for this great reformer and shrewd jurist, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, he wanted to propose actions, not through violence or animosity, but by planning to tend to one or two men a

(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 173.

(2) *Ibid.*

day at a time. He would continue to do that until it facilitated reform within the people of the *Ummah* and unveiled a light in the dark. Thus, 'Umar wisely did not want to pursue anything other than a piece of the world that allowed him to touch hearts with."[1]

Nobody could possibly claim that this portrays that 'Umar wavered in his aims to achieve comprehensive reforms because they were geared at achieving gradual reform. The 'Umar that we know from the time that he bore the responsibility of his *Ummah* never sought to waver in his duty, not even a handbreadth of it, towards the Qur'ān and *Sunnah.* Conversely, 'Umar here portrayed an understanding of the vital attitude that was needed for these aims to fully take shape, as unremitting pressure only generates an explosion and no matter how trivial or insignificant that explosion might be, it must burn and destroy in some way or another. If is possible for leaders and people in positions of responsibility to avoid causing this fire and destruction by means of observing a vital manner of conduct that complements and builds on the human psyche, then why do they not do it?[2] Therefore, when 'Umar's son, 'Abd al-Mālik, said to him: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Execute Allāh's commands, as I do not care if it brings us harm", what was the resilient Caliph's reply? "If the people got wind of what you say, they would oblige me to use the sword and there is no good in a good that cannot be revived except by the sword. There is not good in a good that cannot

(1) *Ibid*, p. 174.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 174.

be revived except by the sword."[(1)] To come to the point, a Caliph possessing this sort of resilience and acumen could not possibly relinquish his aims for a single day.[(2)] What has just been related provides testimony to 'Umar's resilience in administrating and executing general policy - a policy of upholding justice, spreading Islām and building the "State of the *'Aqīdah* (Sound Creed)."[(3)] The following attestations signify 'Umar's resilience:

1. "Do not hasten to us lest you are late in observing the prayer in its appointed time":

One day, 'Umar went out to his guards and said: "Which of you knows this man who we dispatched to Egypt (he had been assigned on a mission not long before that)?" They replied: "All of us know him." So 'Umar said: "Let the youngest one among you go and summon him." That took place on a Friday and because the young man thought that he would keep 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz waiting a long time, he said: "You do not have to rush me, I will hold up my garment in

(1) *Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh* [A Complete History] taken from *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 175.

(2) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 175.

(3) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 329.

haste", and he took hold of his garment ready to set off. 'Umar then came to him and said: "Do not be frightened. Today is Friday and we have delegated you, not ordered you to hasten in matters pertaining to the Muslims. Therefore do not burden yourself with hastening to us lest you are late in observing the prayer at its appointed time."(1) In this situation, 'Umar expressed flexibility in executing orders to prevent his commissary from missing the prayer in order to promptly fulfill the task assigned to him.(2)

2. "Why did you not wait until you were not fasting before setting out?"

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz summoned his official from Khorasān who set out to the Caliph immediately. When he reached the Caliph's location in Damascus, the Caliph saw traces of fatigue and hardship on his face, so he asked him: "When did you set out?" He answered: "In the month of Ramaḍān." 'Umar therefore said to him: "The hardship shows from your appearance! Why did you not wait until you were not fasting before setting out?"(3)

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 106.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaş min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 330.

(3) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī taken from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaş min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 330.

3. "Do not be obstinate towards the people or cause them difficulty and distress":

Ibn Sa'ad mentions that Maymūn bin Mahrān, who was in charge of the Board of Administration in Damascus, said: "Disbursements were being given to handicaps, so I said: 'The handicapped should be given charity, while it is able-bodied men who should be entitled to maintenance'. The people consequently complained about me to 'Umar, saying: 'He is obstinate towards us and causes us distress and difficulty', so 'Umar wrote to me saying: 'When my letter reaches you, do not be obstinate towards the people or cause them difficulty or distress, for I do not like that'."[1] 'Umar therefore wrote to communicate the principle of resilience and the facilitation of matters.

4. Resilience in Dialogue and Understanding:

Peaceful dialogue and contesting facts with facts was 'Umar's attitude in dealing with disputes and debates, as we have already mentioned in the case of the Kharijites. It happened that a group of people from al-Ḥarūriyyah came to 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to ask him about something and he advised them in their best interests. However, some of his advisors who were with him said that he should have been tough with them and showed no lenience towards them but 'Umar's attitude was to be kind and lenient towards them in

(1) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5380/).

order to get what he wanted from them. The people of al-Ḥarūriyyah were mutually pleased for him to send them their maintenance and provisions for as long as he remained in power. Based on that agreement, they went away. After they had gone out, 'Umar hit the knee of his companion sitting next to him and said: "O friend! If you can apply some medicine apart from scalding to cure your friend then do it, but never ever scald as it won't work!"[1]

5. *Intellectual Resilience:*

'Umar was characterized with intellectual resilience and he amenably avoided all types of harshness and austerity. As we mentioned earlier, 'Umar sent Yazīd bin Abī Mālik and al-Ḥārith bin Muḥammad to teach the *Sunnah* to the people and offered them stipends for their work. Yazīd took his stipend but al-Ḥārith did not, saying: "I cannot take a fee on knowledge that has been granted to me by Allāh." When this was mentioned to 'Umar, he said: "While we do not consider what Yazīd did as wrong, may Allāh enhance the likes of al-Ḥārith among us."[2] 'Umar's response here expresses the necessary characteristics the Muslim ruler should have in that he showed intellectual resilience and flexibility. Thus, he did not say that it was wrong for someone to take money

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(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 768-.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Life of 'Umar] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 160; *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

for intellectual services but at the same time he asked Allāh to increase the likes of those who perform these services without taking a reward other than the reward of Allāh.(1) Like this, 'Umar showed he completely supported differences of opinion, as he would frequently say: "What pleases me is that if the Companions of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not differ on some matters, the reason that they did not differ was because there was no license to do so."(2) And he would say: "The difference of opinion practiced by the Companions of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pleases me more than red camels."(3) Statements as these attest to 'Umar's resilient attitude in administering the State and it was in no way an impediment to the execution of resolutions, the achievement of defined aims or the fulfilment of objectives and ambitions.(4)

The Importance of Time in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administration:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz utilised all his time effectively

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(1) *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 184.

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 275.

(3) *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* [The Classes] (5381/).

(4) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 332.

but not solely in administering the State or in pursuing the welfare of the *Ummah* but he also afforded time to observing Allāh's right through worship. He would therefore spend his nights isolated in prayer, not speaking to anyone after the time of offering the *Witr* prayer.(1) On the subject of utilising time, 'Umar would often say: "The day and night both work in you (i.e. in humans), so work in them."(2) He would utilise his time in performing good deeds and to the same end he would hasten to do them, take prompt action on matters and in making decisions, and avoid all things that would delay him from attending to his affairs. The clearest proof of that is the speed in which he issued directives and resolutions, as Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm confirms in an account, saying: "After Sulaymān was buried (just after the time of the *Maghrib* (sunset) prayer), 'Umar called for a pen and paper to be brought to him and he wrote down three things that he personally vowed to Allāh that he would not postpone doing. At that point, he left and immediately carried out all three things. Bewildered by it, the people took hold of the paper, saying: 'What is this rashness? Why did he not just wait till he got back to his house?'" What the people saw was the love and passion of the leader, though he was well known for being silent and secretive in his actions. It is not that 'Umar was always hasty or that he loved to act in such a way, but the fact of the matter was that he held himself to account and he could not bear to delay

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, p. 210, 211.

(2) *Al-Idārah fī at-Turāth al-Islāmī* [Administration in Islāmic Heritage] by al-Bur'ī and 'Ābidīn (1279/).

taking action in those things.

The first imperative he wrote down was for him not to hurt anyone or anything personally, to the same extent that the Muslim troops in Constantinople had been afflicted with intense hunger and distress before their enemies. For that reason, 'Umar ordered Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik's withdrawal from Constantinople and the lifting of the siege. 'Umar felt that if he consented to such harm afflicting the Muslims, the matter would have been between him and Allāh, the Sublime, and it would have worse with the passing of every hour; hence the reason for his hastiness.(1) It was certainly correct to claim that the conditions the troops of Constantinople were made to suffer rendered their return exigent and so appropriate action was taken for an appropriate reason and time.(2) 'Umar wrote to enforce the dismissal of Usāmah bin Zayd at-Tanūkhī who occupied the Bureau of *Kharāj* (Revenue) in Egypt on the grounds of his tyranny and oppression. He also wrote to dismiss Yazīd bin Abī Muslim from his post in the African administrative district for the same reasons.(3)

'Umar was also conscious of choosing the right time to announce directives or administrative decisions and how to ease their announcement. He would therefore use rhetoric to appeal the people at times when they were most inclined

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Life of 'Umar] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 32.

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 337.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 337, 338.

to take what he had to say into account, such as once the people had formed large gatherings, on holy occasions or in holy places. The reason for this is that people take more of an interest in their lives under these circumstances, like the annual *Ḥajj* season when there are opportune times to address and write to the people with greater likelihood that they will respond to it in the desired way. Choosing this time to address the people achieves two things: firstly, conveying the directive, decision or measure to the largest assembly of Muslims who have come from every country; secondly, the speed of transmission that announcing the directive or decision achieves in that assembly at that time.[1]

On that note, he once wrote to the people observing the *Mawsim* (*Ḥajj* Season), saying: "And so…I bear witness to Allāh and implore Him to exhibit my innocence in the Prohibited (Sacred) Month and in the Prohibited (Sacred) City and on the day of the Great Pilgrimage. I am completely innocent of the injustice or error committed against you by any unjust man and from any harm inflicted upon you by any attacker. I am completely innocent of having ordered such harm or injustice against you, or even accepting that such harm be inflicted upon you. I have never intended to cause any harm on any one of you, unless it happened behind my back and when my attention was averted, in which case it was against my wishes. I hope that such unintended harm will not be counted against me, and therefore, I hope to be

(1) *Ibid*, p. 339.

forgiven for it, especially when you know that I have tried to stop such harm from touching you.

Indeed, I am the helper of all those who feel that they have been maltreated and I say to them that they can come to complain to me at any time. I will help those who feel that their unjust governors have inflicted injustice upon them. If any governor of mine has practised injustice and transgressed beyond what is good, or if he has not applied the rules of the Book and the *Sunnah*, then he has no right over you to obey him. In fact, in such cases, I will leave it for you to decide his position until he changes his mind and goes back to his senses to apply what is right while he is blamed and reprehensible.

Moreover, there is no State which prospers on subjects who dutifully obey their rich while disobeying and neglecting their poor without giving them any of your provisions and goods. Any one of you who receives some good man who comes to do good in the Path of Allāh, whether in general or in particular, then he will be rewarded with a prize of two hundred to three hundred *Dīnār.* Indeed, the reward shall be calculated in accordance with the amount of work done and the effort he had exerted. May Allāh bless a man who works hard, does not feel hesitant to do such good and who travels in the Way of Allāh to administer some right and justice among the people.

Verily, had it not been for the fear that you would be

distracted from your religious duties, I would have drawn up plans for you concerning the truth that Allāh has revived for you and the falsehood that Allāh has eliminated from you. Allāh is the Only One Capable of doing that for you and so all praise belongs to Him and no other. Since Allāh put me in charge of my own actions, I am just like anybody else. Peace be upon you."[1]

This constitutes a pronounced edict by the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, in fighting against injustice and administering justice. He strived assiduously to redress the grievances of the victims he knew of, but as can only be expected, there were those who could not reach him. He therefore wrote this edict and announced on the day of the Great Pilgrimage in the presence of pilgrims from all Muslim countries in order to declare his own innocence with regards to the undetermined grievances that had not reached him. He also pronounced his innocence from those governors who carry out unjust acts and associate obedience to them with obedience to Allāh. For that reason, every member of the State, i.e. all citizens, were made watchers over the governors of their lands as a way of making governors strive to stay on the right path and correct themselves if they deviated.

The most astonishing statement that appears in this edict is 'Umar's allocation of money to members of the *Ummah* who endeavour to do good, while also offering to cover the travel expenses incurred in the process as a way of assuring

(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (5293-292/).

people that no loss would be felt on their part. 'Umar finally closes his edict by thanking and praising Allāh, the Majestic, for allowing reforms to be carried out at his hands. There is no denying that this epitomises sincerity towards Allāh such that no credit is afforded to oneself in recognition of Allāh's benignity, help and succour.(1) It also testifies to 'Umar's application of investigating and considering the importance of time whereby 'Umar's time-management was not restricted to utilising time and appreciating its importance but rather it was complete management in every aspect of utilising time.(2)

The Division of Work in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Administration:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz openly displayed the principle of dividing-up work and important tasks related to the State. In a letter, he wrote to 'Uqbah bin Zar'ah aṭ-Ṭā'ī after he had assumed authority over the Bureau of *Kharāj* (Revenues) in Khorasān, 'Umar said: "The authority has pillars without which he would not be sound: the governor is a pillar, the judge is a pillar, the treasurer is a pillar, and fourth pillar is me (i.e. the Caliph)."(3) This denotes the general division of State responsibilities but in addition to the main pillar is their general

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islāmic History] (16151/).

(2) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 342.

(3) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī taken from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 342.

administration. This refers to: governorship comprised of the governor to the region; the judiciary represented by the judge; State finance represented by the governor to the region or the treasurer of the *Bayt al-Māl;* and the highest authority of the State represented by the Caliph.

To each of these there were divisions to undertake separate tasks pertaining to the State, such as the organisation of *Jihād* which fell under the jurisdiction of the Military Board headed by Manṣūr bin Ghālib,(1) while al-Walīd bin Hishām and 'Amr bin Qays as-Sukūni were assigned to head the summer military campaigns.(2) Another division connected with internal security was run by 'Umar bin Yazīd bin Bishr al-Kalbī who occupied the post of Head of Police.(3) 'Umar bin Muhājir bin Abī Muslim al-Anṣārī was appointed as Chief Bodyguard and his Chief Minister was Ḥubaysh, his slave, who introduced check-points, such as licensing in Egypt under the headship of 'Umar bin Razīq al-Aylī, which is now known as the point of customs.(4) A third division specialised in correspondence, which was run by Layth bin Abī Ruqayyah (Ruqayyah being the daughter of Umm al-Ḥakm bint Abī Sufyān)(5) among others. Heading the Board of Signet was Na'īm bin Salāmah.(6) A division was also set up for the purpose of following-up

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar* [The Life of 'Umar] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, p. 71.

(2) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalifah's History], p. 324.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 344.

(5) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalifah's History], p. 324.

(6) *Ibid*, p. 325.

financial affairs, which had multiple sub-divisions including the *Kharāj* (Revenues), and was headed by 'Uqbah bin Zar'ah aṭ-Ṭā'ī.[1] The division responsible for charitable disbursements was assigned by 'Umar to 'Abdullah bin 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin 'Utbah al-Qurashī.[2] Running the division equivalent to a monetary institution in the modern day and age was assigned to 'Umar bin Abī Ḥamlah al-Qurashī[3] and the Central Board of *Kharāj* (Revenue) was run by Ṣāliḥ bin Jabīr al-Ghadānī.[4]

In the field of teaching and education, 'Umar set up permanent teaching programmes in the mosques and paid those who assumed the role of teaching and instructing people on religious matters from the time of their commencement. Similarly, 'Umar paid people involved in *Da'wah* (inviting to Islām) and the task of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He also established a body for issuing *Fatāwā* (legal rulings) in Egypt that was formed of three jurists.[5] On top of the aforementioned divisions, there were other government bureaus such as the Bureau of Prayer, Bureau of *Ḥajj*, Bureau of Managing Affairs, Bureau of Post and others

(1) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 344.

(2) *Umarā' Damashq fil-Islām* [The Commanders of Damascus in Islām], p. 48.

(3) *Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wa Siyāsatihī fī Rudd al-Maẓālim* ['Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and his Policy on Restoring the Rights of the Victims] by Mājidah Fayṣal, p. 295.

(4) *Tārīkh Khalīfah* [Khalifah's History], p. 324.

(5) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] taken from *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 344.

that are too numerous to mention. Nevertheless, this was the way in which 'Umar practiced the division of work and the delegation of tasks throughout his State.[1] Without the slightest exaggeration, it is fair to say that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was a first-class statesman.

An important factor in the division and delegation of work in his administration is that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz would by and large grant his governors the right to appoint their own ministers and subordinates and form their own advisory committees. They also had the right to oversee their administrative district's army, maintain internal security, monitor and keep track of expenditure, and so on. Overall, these were just some of the indicators and qualities of the depth of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's knowledge when it came to running the State.

Reasons for the Success of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Project of Reform

Many factors contributed to the success of his reforms, amongst which were:

8) His personal characteristics comprising knowledge, humility, asceticism, fear, clemency, resoluteness, forgiveness, compassion, prudence and justice coupled

(1) *An-Namūdhaj al-Idārī al-Mustakhlaṣ min Idārat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Management Model Extracted from the Administration of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz], p. 345.

with his extensive administrative qualities relating to the art of planning, organisation, leadership, control and knowing people.

1) That he possessed a distinct vision of reform and renewal aimed at returning the State and *Ummah* to its former glory in the form of a guided Caliphate on the Prophetic path.

2) Immersing the *Ummah* in this project so that it could get a sense of its administrator's honesty and sincerity.

3) The presence of an assembly of righteous scholars during his reign who were qualified to guide and direct the State and the *Ummah*. Whenever the opportunity emerged for 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz to pass a ruling, he would afford them the platform to deliberate, dispute and verify over the important matters that 'Umar had referred to them. In this lies a vital lesson about the importance of complete legal knowledge, trust and God-consciousness as well as the leadership abilities within the characters of the righteous scholars. For this reason , 'Umar assisted them in terms of allowing them to rule by the Law of Allāh through holding State positions, direct the masses and create an understanding around the great Islāmic project.

4) Vigilance in ruling by Islāmic Law in every minor and major issue at the level of the State and *Ummah*. In turn, this begets Divine Conciliation, as Allāh says: "*And if the people of the towns had believed and had 'Taqwa' ('Piety'),*

certainly, We would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and earth..." (*al-A'rāf*, 7:96)

The Impact of Adhering to the Rules of the Qur'ān *and Sunnah on 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's State:*

Contemplating on the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and on the lives of nations and peoples gives the worshipper a basic understanding of the impact of Allāh's laws and precepts on the souls of people and existence. The place of Allāh's laws and precepts is clarified in the Book of Allāh, which says: "*Allāh wishes to make clear (what is lawful and what is unlawful) to you, and to show the ways of those before you, and accept your repentance and Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*" (*an-Nisā'*, 4:26)

The laws and precepts of Allāh are made clear by examining the authentic traditions related to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who would take advantage of any opportunity to convey the laws and precepts to his Companions. By way of example, the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had a favourite she-camel named al-'Aḍbā' that had never been beaten in a race until a Bedouin on a much younger camel finally succeeded in defeating it. The Companions were shocked by this and barely dared to tell the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but knowing that all creatures slow down

in old age, he merely smiled and said: "Allāh has the right to humiliate those who rise high in the world."[1] The Book of Allāh has guided us to follow the lessons of the *Sunan* (Traditions; Laws) as they occurred in all places and times throughout history. Allāh says: "*Many similar ways (and mishaps of life) were faced by nations (believers and disbelievers) that have passed away before you, so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved. This (the* Qur'ān*) is a plain statement for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who are 'Muttaqūn' ('Pious').*" (*Āl-'Imrān*, 3:137-8). The Book of Allāh also guides us to understand the *Sunan* through examination and contemplation, saying: "*Say: 'Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth', but neither 'Ayāt' ('Proofs; Verses; Signs') nor warners benefit those who believe not. Then do they wait for anything except for destruction) like that of the days of the men who passed away before them? Say: 'Wait, then, I am (also) with you among those who wait'.*" (*Yūnus*, 10:101-2)

Characteristics of the Divine Sunan (Laws; Traditions; Ways):

1) **They are predetermined:** Allāh says: "*There is no blame on the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in that which Allāh has made legal for him. That has been Allāh's way with those who have passed away of (the Prophets of) old. And the Command of Allāh is a decree determined.*" (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33:38) In other words,

(1) *Al-Bukhārī*, no. 2872.

what Allāh commands and rules is not for any creature to doubt or skew from, as whatever Allāh wills, is, and whatever He does not will is not.

2) **They do not change or alter:** Allāh says: "*If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease (evil desire of illegal sex), and those who spread false news among the people in al-Madīnah stop not, We shall certainly let you overpower them then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbours but a little while. * Accursed, they shall be seized wherever found, and killed with a (terrible) slaughter. * That was the way of Allāh in the case of those who passed away of old, and you will not find any change in the way of Allāh.*" (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33: 60-2) And Allāh says: "*And those who disbelieve fight against you, they will certainly turn their backs; then they will neither have found a 'Walī' ('Protector, Guardian') nor a Helper.* * That *has been the way of Allāh already with those who passed away before. And you will not find any change in the way of Allāh.*" (*al-Fatḥ*, 48:22-3)

3) **They are past and do not cease:** Allāh says: "*Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven. But if they return (thereto), then the examples of those before them have already preceded as warning.*" (*al-Anfāl*, 8:38)

4) **They are not in disagreement and there is no benefit in disputing them:** Allāh says: "*Have they not travelled through the earth and seen what was the end of those*

before them? They were more in number than them and mightier in strength, and in the traces (they have left behind them) in the land; yet all that they used to earn availed them not. Then when their messenger came to them with clear proofs, they were glad (and proud) with that which they had of the knowledge (of worldly things). And that at which they used to mock, surrounded them (i.e. punishment). So when they saw our punishment, they said: 'We believe in Allāh Alone and reject (all) that we used to associate with Him as (His) partners. Then their faith (in Islāmic Monotheism) could not avail them when they saw Our punishment. (Like) this has been the way of Allāh in dealing with His slaves. And there the disbelievers lost utterly (when Our torment covered them)." (*Ghāfir,* 40:82-5)

5) **The stubborn do not benefit from them but the pious take lessons from them:** Allāh says: "*Many similar ways (and mishaps of life) were faced by nations (believers and disbelievers) that have passed away before you, so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who disbelieved. This (the* Qur'ān*) is a plain statement for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who are 'Muttaqūn' ('Pious').*" (*Āl-'Imrān,* 3:137-8)

6) **They apply to the righteous and the immoral:** The *Sunan* of Allāh apply to the believers – the highest of which are the prophets – and Allāh has ongoing *Sunan* that have effects on those who comply with the law of

Allāh and those who oppose it.[1]

Ruling by What Allāh Revealed has Worldly Implications and Implications in the Afterlife:

The Worldly Implications that Manifested in 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's State:

1. Succession and Empowerment:

It is discernable that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) was exceptionally empowered by Allāh on the earth due to his own strict observance of Allāh's law in relation to himself, his family, his companions and workers, and his *Ummah*. He was genuinely sincere to Allāh in his guided project of reform. Thus, Allāh, the Sublime, aided and supported him for having acted accordingly and in turn, 'Umar obtained Allāh's promise, Who says: "*Allāh has promised those among you who believe and do righteous, good deeds that He will certainly granted them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islām). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (the believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieved after this, they are the 'Fāsiqūn' ('Rebellious, Disobedient to Allāh).*" (*an-Nūr*, 24:55)

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(1) Al-Ḥakm *wa at-Taḥākum fī Khiṭāb al-Waḥī* (2669 ,667/).

2. Security and Stability:

The revolutions that took place during the Umayyad era were sparked in opposition to the dominant regime, particularly by the Kharijites. Yet, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was able to settle many of the uprisings of his day by way of dialogue and discussion. His era was, for that reason, marked by security and stability owing to the justice of his rule, settlement of grievances, great respect for all sections of society and observance of the *Sharī'ah*'s (Islāmic Law) application to all aspects of life. Allāh says: "*It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allāh and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their Belief with 'Ẓulm' ('Wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allāh), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided*." (*al-An'ām,* 6:82)

3. *Victory and Triumph:*

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz sought the victory of Allāh's Religion in everything he owned and Allāh willed that the *Sunnah* of Allāh actualised in his victory because Allāh guarantees victory over one's enemies to whoever seeks to uphold His law by His Strength and Might. Allāh says: "*Verily, Allāh will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allāh is All-Strong, All-Mighty. Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) enjoin observance of compulsory prayer and paying the Zakāt ('Prescribed Alms') and enjoin good and forbid evil. With Allāh rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures).*" (*al-Ḥajj,* 22:41) Allāh herein promises to give

victory to whoever helps His Cause, Book, Religion and Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He does not help those who rule by other than what Allāh revealed and say what they do not know, (1) as we see all too often in our day and age.

4. Glory and Honour:

Words of great glory and honour have been written down in the books of history about the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz because of his firm devotion to the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Those who are proud to belong to the Book of Allāh, who oversee the *Ummah* by it, make it the highest word in the land and keep their feet firmly on the right path are honoured and glorified for their adherence to the laws and precepts of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Allāh says: "*Indeed, We have sent down for you (O mankind) a Book (the* Qur'ān*) in which there is 'dhikrukum' ('your reminder or an honour for you', i.e. honour for the one who follows the teachings of the* Qur'ān*). Will you not then understand?.*" (*al-Anbiyā',* 21:10) In explaining this Verse, Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "In it is your honour."(2) In light of that, the *Ummah* will not obtain honour and glory except for those who follow the teachings of Islām.

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(1) *Ṣafaḥāṭ Mushriqah min at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Gleaming Pages from Islāmic History] by aṣ-Ṣallābī (2306/).

(2) *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (3170/).

5. A Life of Blessing and Comfort during His Era:

Allāh says: "*And if the people of the towns had believed and had 'Taqwa' ('Piety'), certainly, We would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and earth...*" (*al-A'rāf*, 7:96) Establishing and applying Allāh's Law incurs material and moral blessings whereby a person who has faith and consciousness of Allāh is honoured by Allāh with this great Divine Gift. The blessings Allāh promises to bestow on those who believe and obey him with certainty and conviction are of every sort and array that they cannot be described or defined in words. The text of the Qur'ān depicts an abundant stream descending from every place and gushing forth to every place without defining or describing it in detail. The blessings are of every sort, colour, shape and size imaginable and unimaginable.[1] During the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, the people were fortunate to feel and witness these blessings whether material or moral. Hence, the people enjoyed blissful and comfortable lifestyles, State finance had augmented, and contentment prevailed in every part of the vast Umayyad State such that the presence of people deserving *Zakāt* all but vanished. In fact, this created a problem for wealthy individuals who needed a quick solution (since *Zakāt* is compulsory), as Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz delegated me to the Board of Charitable Disbursements within the African administrative district. After assuming office, I requested the poor to come forth so that we could give to them but we found there were no poor people

(1) *Fī Ẓilāl al*-Qur'ān [In the Shade of the Qur'ān] (31339/).

to give to. I could not find anyone to take money from me as 'Umar had enhanced the wealth of the people, so instead I spent the money on freeing Muslim captives."(1) One of Zayd bin al-Khaṭṭāb's sons said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz reigned for two and a half years, that is thirty months, and he did not die before men would come to us with large amounts of money and say: 'Allocate this to the poor', but he would not leave without taking his money with him, since there was nobody to give it to. 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz made the people rich."(2) These are the general benefits generated by the blessing of the Islāmic government operating in accordance with Allāh's law.

6. The Spread of Virtue and Dilapidation of Vice:

Regarding the purification of morals and cultivation of virtue, Allāh says: "*Indeed, Allāh conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger* (Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses (the* Qur'ān), *purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book and Wisdom, while before that they had been in manifest error.*" (*Āl-'Imrān,* 3:164) Hence, the meaning of "purify them" here is enjoining them to do good and forbidding them from doing evil in order that they purify themselves from the impurity and evil that they had

(1) *Rijāl al-Fikr wa ad-Da'wah* [Men of Thinking and Preaching] (158/).

(2) *Ibid.*

been engrossed in in their state of ignorance and polytheism.[1]

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz had been interested in spreading virtue and combatting vice and in conjunction with him in this movement was the school for preaching, guidance, purification and education whose pioneers included Al-Ḥasan al-Başrī, Ayūb as-Sukhtiyānī, Mālik bin Dīnār and the like. This school accomplished incredible results in spreading virtue and dilapidating vice and it was during the reign of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz that great renewal took place in the direction of the *Ummah,* Islāmic society and the advancement of decorum, morality, inclinations and tendencies in this short space of time. In his work, aṭ-Ṭabarī says: "Al-Walīd liked construction and manufacturing and the people of his time were the same whereby they would talk to each other about construction and manufacturing. Sulaymān next assumed the caliphate and he liked food and women more, upon which the people would ask each other about marriage and female-slaves. When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz came to power, the people would meet up and one man would ask another: 'What are you doing tonight? How much of the Qur'ān will you memorise? When will you complete it? How much of this month have you fasted?'"[2]

7. Guidance and Certainty:

(1) *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (1/401); al-Ḥakm *wa at-Taḥākim* (2/691).

(2) *Tārīkh* aṭ-Ṭabarī [Ṭabarī's History] extracted from *At-Tajdīd fī Fikr al-Islāmī* [Renewal in Islāmic Thought] by Dr 'Adnān Muḥammad, p. 87.

In an address 'Umar wrote to be read out to the *Hajj* pilgrims, he said: "Verily, had it not been for the fear that you would be distracted from your religious duties, I would have drawn up plans for you concerning the truth that Allāh has revived for you and the falsehood that Allāh has eliminated from you. Allāh is the Only One Capable of doing that for you and so all praise belongs to Him and no other. Since Allāh put me in charge of my own actions, I am just like anybody else. Peace be upon you."[1] It has been stressed that 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz categorically adhered to ruling his State by the law of Allāh, which is why Allāh bestowed His Favour on him in the form of guidance and certainty of the truth, as Allāh says: "*But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission*." (*an-Nisā'*, 4:65) Allāh then says: "*And if We ordered them (saying): 'Kill yourselves (i.e. the innocent ones kill the guilty ones) and leave your homes', very few of them would have done it; but if they had done what they were told, it would have been better for them, and would have strengthened their faith. And indeed We would have bestowed upon them a great reward from Ourselves. And indeed We would have guided them to the Straight Way.*" (*ibid:* 66-8) The thing for which they were admonished and promised great good was ruling by Allāh's law and following the lead of the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah

(1) *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* (5293-292/).

be upon him). Had they complied when they were ordered to stand firm in their belief in Allāh and not waver in their religion, they would have received unswerving guidance to obtain great reward.[1]

Guidance and certainty in one's affairs are definitely gifts that Allāh grants to those whose hearts yield to His Command and whose limbs surrender to His Rule.[2] The Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz represents historical proof controverting those who ceaselessly utter the words, in a parrot-like fashion, that a State governed by the rulings of Islāmic *Sharī'ah* is susceptible to problems, crises and failure and that it is nothing but a dream. In that sense, history continues to defy them and so, in response to those people, it is said: "*Say (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Produce your proof if you are truthful.'*" (*al-Baqarah,* 2:111)

What struck me in my study of Islāmic history was the continuity of Islāmic generations coherently impacting on one another. Hence, the Honourable Shaykh, Abū Ḥafṣ Ma'īn ad-Dīn, 'Umar bin Muḥammad bin Khaḍr al-Irbilī wrote a biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz for Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī (d. 568 AH) to emulate in his own movement of reform and renewal, whereupon the fruits that were reaped in 'Umar's time were similarly reaped under the rule of Nūr ad-Dīn. The latter military commander and political leader was unequivocally

(1) *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (1485/).

(2) Al-Ḥakm *wa at-Taḥākum* (2690/).

convinced of 'Umar's approach and method of ruling, about which Abū Ḥafṣ says in the introduction to his book which he proffered to Nūr ad-Dīn: "It is sound knowledge that he emulated the virtuous and pious *Salaf* (Forebears) in gaining complete reward and remaining in constant remembrance. Following the rightly-guided ones reforms one's inner self and betters one's course of conduct, since Allāh, Glorifed is He, ordered His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to emulate the former prophets, saying: "*They are those whom Allāh guided, so follow their guidance*] (*al-An'ām*, 6:90) And Allāh says: "*And We relate to you (O* Muḥammad, *(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) of the news of the Messengers in order that We make you strong and make your heart firm thereby.*" (*Ḥūd*, 11:120) For this reason, I am extremely keen to compile the righteous biography and see it as my obligation to do my utmost best in supporting a rule based on honest loyalty and brotherhood. I have therefore put all my energy into compiling the biography of the brilliant guide, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh be pleased with him), after having resorted to the Benevolent Allāh, Glorified is His Name, to aid and facilitate it for me. Once Allāh had laid open my heart for the acceptance of undertaking this task and evidence of support had appeared, I embarked on compiling this biography with the help of righteousness and God-consciousness."[1]

This esteemed shaykh had presented an intellectual

(1) *Al-Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation of the Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (12/).

methodology to Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangī in the biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, which he successively used to build a State of *'Aqīdah* (Sound Creed), govern by the *Sharī'ah* (Islāmic Law), administer justice, lift illegally imposed taxes, revive the *Sunnah,* suppress innovation and heresy, consolidate the *Ummah's* identity, galvanise the spirit of *Jihād* (Struggling or Fighting for Allāh's Cause), disseminate knowledge, and contribute to realising prosperity and success. On a personal level, Nūr ad-Dīn was unmatched in his asceticism, piety, worship, generosity and sincerity. If one wants to know more about this great figure, reference should be made to *al-Jihād wa at-Tajdīd fīl-Qurun as-Sādis al-Hijrī: 'Ahd Nūr ad-Dīn wa* Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn "Fighting for Allāh's Cause and Renewal in the Sixth Century AH: The Era of Nūr ad-Dīn and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn] by Ḥāmid an-Nāṣir.

Historians dwell with satisfaction on the impact that governing by the law of Allāh has on the people on whom the orders and injunctions of Allāh are executed. Such agreeable impacts befell the states of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz', Nūr ad-Dīn az-Zangi, Yūsuf bin Tāshifīn and Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ, all attained by the ongoing and past *Sunan* (Laws Traditions; Ways) of Allāh that neither change or alter. Any Muslim leadership that pursues this sublime goal and noble endeavour with the intention of leaving the *Sunan* of Allāh on the earth, it will be achieved and, even if some time later, the effects of that rule will be seen on its individuals, societies, states and leaders. It should be said that the real aim of Islāmic historical research is to draw considerable benefit from those who preceded us in

belief in their *Jihād,* knowledge, education, diligent attempts to establish the *Sharīah* of Allāh and obtain the *Sunan* of Allāh. Indeed, the splendid Divine Successes within the history of our *Ummah* were executed by Allāh at the hands of those who were sincere to their Lord, and Religion, upheld His Law, sought His Pleasure, and put Him above all else.

The Last Days of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's Life and His Death (May Allāh Have Mercy on Him)

1. The Last Sermon He Delivered:

The last ever sermon delivered by 'Umar was given in Khanasser in which he said:

> "O people, you were not created in vain, nor will you be left to yourselves. Rather, you will return to a place in which Allāh will descend in order to judge among you and distinguish between you. Destitute and lost are those who forsake the all-encompassing Mercy of Allāh, and they will be excluded from Paradise, the borders of which are as wide as the heavens and the earth. Don't you know that protection, tomorrow, will be limited to those who feared Allāh [today], and to those who sold something ephemeral for something

permanent, something small for something great, and fear for protection? Don't you realize that you are the descendants of those who have perished, that those who remain will take their place after you, and that this will continue until you are all returned to Allāh? Every day you dispatch to Allāh, at all times of the day, someone who has died, his term having come to an end. You bury him in a crack in the earth and then leave him without a pillow or a bed. He has parted from his loved ones, severed his connections with the living, and taken up residence in the earth, whereupon he comes face to face with the accounting. He is mortgaged to his deeds: He needs his accomplishments, but not the material things he left on earth.

Therefore, fear Allāh before death descends and its appointed times expire. I swear by Allāh that I say those words to you knowing that I myself have committed more sins than any of you; I therefore ask Allāh for forgiveness and I repent. Whenever we learn that one of you needs something, I try to satisfy his need to the extent that I am able. Whenever I can provide satisfaction to one of you out of my possessions, I seek to treat him as my equal and my relative, so that my life and his life are of equal value. I swear by Allāh that had I wanted something else, namely, affluence, then it would have been easy for me to utter

the word, aware as I am of the means for obtaining this. But Allāh has issued in an eloquent Book and a just example (*Sunnah*) by means of which He guides us to obedience and proscribes disobedience."

He lifted up the edge of his robe and began to cry and sob, causing the people around him to break into tears. Then he stepped down. That was the last sermon he gave before he died, may Allāh have mercy on him.

2. *His Poisoning:*

Accounts differ on the cause of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's illness and death, whereby some state that he died from fear of Allāh and his concern for the affairs of the people, which has been narrated on the authority of his wife, Fāṭimah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, and Ibn Sa'ad also relates it in his *Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt* on the authority of Lahī'ah.[1] Alternatively, it has been maintained that 'Umar died of poisoning, as by the time of his death, the Umayyads who had been accustomed to all sorts of licenses could no longer tolerate his administration of justice that went against their interests and the checks on their unbounded freedoms, which is why they plotted against him.[2] It came as no surprise that the Umayyads would try to poison 'Umar to get rid of him and the account relates that a slave of the

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (143/); *al-Ḥilyah* (5342/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (143/).

Caliph was bribed with a thousand *Dinar* and promises of his manumission to administer the deadly poison. It is said that the slave was reluctant to carry it out but they threatened to kill him if he refused and so he was forced between reward and punishment to administer the poison. It was as he was serving a drink to 'Umar that he slipped in the poison but once 'Umar had drank from it he immediately felt the effects of the poison in his stomach.(1)

Mujāhid is reported to have said: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said to me: 'What are the people saying about me?' I replied: 'They are saying you are possessed (by the effects of magic)'. He said: 'I am not possessed', at which point he sent for the slave and said to him: 'Woe unto you! What brought you to poison me?' 'I was given one thousand *dinar* and promised to be freed', the slave confessed. Having sympathized with the slave who had been put in a difficult situation, 'Umar ordered *Qiṣāṣ* (Legal Penalty of Equality] to be executed against all the Umayyads. 'Umar's ability to forgive the person who had tried to kill him was typical of his fine character, especially as he was convinced that Allāh had better things in store for him and that he would receive a reward for his forgiveness. Had 'Umar wanted to take revenge on him and resolved to carry out the *Ḥadd* (Fixed Punishment), he would not have obtained the reward for forgiveness, but like always, 'Umar was ever keen to increase his good deeds and so he favoured

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 3167-.

forgiveness over taking revenge for himself.[1]

3. 'Umar Bought a Plot of Land for His Grave:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was told that he could choose to be buried in the fourth chamber next to the Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Abū Bakr and 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with them). The people suggested to him: "Why don't you move closer to al-Madīnah?" To this, 'Umar humbly replied: "I would rather be tortured by Allāh with all kinds of torture, except the torture of the Fire, than Allāh, the Sublime, know that I considered myself fit to be buried with these people!"[2] 'The *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (may Allāh have mercy on him) refused anything other than to buy the plot of land where he was to buried with him own money due to his humility and strict accountability of himself. Narrations tell of how he said to the people around him while he was on his deathbed: "Go to the monk and ask him to sell you a plot of land for my grave." The Christian monk said to him: "By Allāh, O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,* I will give you a decent and close plot to be buried in for free." 'Umar, however, refused his offer, saying: "If you sell me the site of my grave I shall stay with you, otherwise I will find one somewhere else." He was therefore sold it a price over which accounts differ on its actual amount, saying

(1) *Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [The History of Islām] (16229/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 3214-; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (145/).

two, six or thirty *dinar*. Nevertheless, a price was settled on and 'Umar put the money in the hand of the Christian man, after which the landowners said: "If we hadn't hated the idea of him going somewhere else, we would never have accepted him paying for it."[1]

4. The Will He Left to His Successor, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik:

During his illness, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, saying: "In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful: From the servant of Allāh, 'Umar, the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik. May peace be upon you – All praise is due to Allāh Whom there is no one worth of worship but He. To proceed: I am writing this letter to you as I suffer the agony of death. I know that I am responsible for those people who I was appointed over and will be held accountable for them by the King of the World and the Hereafter from Whom I will not be able to hide a single deed, as Allāh says: "*Then surely We shall narrate to them (their whole story) with knowledge, and indeed We have not been absent.*" (*al-A'rāf*, 7:7) If Allāh, the Merciful, is pleased with me then I will be a winner and I will be saved from a long and terrible punishment. But if He is displeased with me, then woe unto me as my ending will be dreadful. I therefore implore Allāh and seek refuge in Him to save me by His Mercy from the Hellfire, and to bless me with His Grace and Satisfaction

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzī, pp. 3223-.

by granting me Paradise. I say to you that you must be pious and fearful of Allāh in caring for your subjects and the people you govern. The reason I say this is because you will not stay long after me before you too shall be return to meet the Subtle One, the Aware."[1]

Another narration states that 'Umar said: "Verily, Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Mālik, who was a servant among Allāh's servants, appointed me as his successor having endowed the pledge of allegiance to me first and to Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik after me. I swear by Allāh that had I wanted lots of wives or affluence, then it would have been easy for me to utter the word, aware as I am of the means for obtaining this. However, Allāh has issued in an eloquent Book and a just example (*Sunnah*) by means of which He guides us to obedience and proscribes disobedience. May the Peace and Mercy of Allāh be upon you." 'Umar imparted advice to his successor, Yazīd bin 'Abd al-Mālik, as best as he could in order to instill the fear of Allāh in Him.[2]

5. The Will He Left to His Children:

When death approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-Azīz, Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik entered upon him and said: "O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* You have really denied your sons by not allowing them to take this money. You have left them helpless

(1) *Ibid*, pp. 3189-; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (147/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (147/).

and nothing to depend upon, so why don't you entrust them to me or to someone like me from you family to take care of them after you go?" 'Umar responded: "Sit me down in my bed", so he was sat in his bed and then he continued: "I have heard what you said, O Maslamah, and as for your saying that I have denied my children by not giving them this money, by Allāh, I have never denied them of a right or given to then what is not theirs. As for what you said about a will, I say: "*Verily, my Walī (Protector, Supporter and Helper) is Allāh Who has revealed the Book (the* Qur'ān*) and He protects (supports and helps) the righteous.*" (*al-A'rāf*, 7:196) Hence my sons are either of two kinds: they are righteous, in which case Allāh will make them successful, or they are not, in which case I would be the first person to not support such a man by giving him money so that he could increase in his disobedience to Allāh. Call my sons to me." So they came to him and when he saw them, his eyes began to well up as he said to them: "I feel that my young self is leaving behind a family with nothing to help them", and he started crying. He then said: "Yet, by the Grace of Allāh, I am leaving you with much good. O my sons! You shall never meet anyone from the Arabs or those who pledged their covenant without knowing that you have some right over them. O sons! In bringing you up, your father had to choose between two things: that you become rich and then your father would go to Hell, or that you remain poor and your father would go to Paradise. Hence, it was more favourable to me that you should remain poor. Now get up with Allāh as

your Protector, get up with Allāh as your Provider!"[1]

Another narration states that 'Umar requested Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik to be present at the time of his death, followed by the ritual washing of his body and dressing him in his burial shroud, then to walk alongside him to his grave and be among those who place him in it. After that, 'Umar reportedly looked at Maslamah and said: "Look, O Maslamah, is there anything that I have left out in this world which I need to write a will for?" Maslamah replied: "Yes, there is one hundred-thousand *Dinar.* I will entrust it to wherever you like." 'Umar said: "Or what is better than that, O Maslamah? That you return it to wherever it came from in the first place." So Maslamah said: ""May Allāh have mercy on you. You have softened our hard hearts and kept us mindful of being righteous."[2]

Many lessons and morals can be drawn from the previous two narrations. The first depicts the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*'s outstanding piety and devotion even when bequeathing his will to his children at the time of death. He was not happy to leave behind anything that might lead to sin or be used in way that he would not know about. Perhaps he thought that if he left his children to one of his relatives, they would give to them from illegitimate sources and he would incur some blame for that. He therefore resorted to Allāh, the Sublime, by entrusted

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1156-; *at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* (16220/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Biography of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakm, pp. 1223-; *at-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* (16222/).

their affair to Him. When given the choice between deciding to make his sons rich in this world by granting them money belonging to the general Muslims – because of which 'Umar would have to face the heat of the Hellfire) -- or whether to give them just a little from clean, permissible means, for which he would be rewarded with Paradise, 'Umar opted for the latter and indicated that he would leave them nothing other than their good name and the respect of the Muslims and *Ahl adh-Dhimmah* (Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule). By leaving them this great endowment, 'Umar honoured them with something that all the money of the world could not buy. This points to a valuable lesson in that it is important for a father to exert every effort to raise his children righteously so that Allāh will protect and preserve them, whereas it is not important for him to give them a lot of money and make sure that they are wealthy after he dies, because if they are not righteous, that money will only aid them in disobeying Allāh even more.[1]

In the second narration, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz instructs his cousin, Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik, to look into the source where money is obtained from, explaining to him that spending it on charity or gifts does not make it *Ḥalāl* (permissible), rather it is necessary to locate its original source and if the people do have a right to it, it must be returned to the rightful owner. He is not free to dispense of it just because he is giving away

(1) *At-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* (16222/).

in charity or in gifts.[1]

6. *His Will to the One He Entrusted with Washing and Shrouding His Body:*

Rāfi' bin Ḥafṣ al-Madanī narrated that 'Umar said to Rajā': "After I pass away, wash my body, shroud me in my burial garb, pray over me and place me in my grave. When they cover me in my shroud, I would like you to loosen the knot around my head and look at my face. If you see that my face is directed towards the *Qiblah* (i.e. towards the Ka'abah, Makkah) then praise and glorify Allāh, but if you see that it turns away from it, go out to the Muslims who are still at my graveside and implore then to supplicate for me to my Lord." Rajā' then narrated: "I was indeed among those who washed and shrouded the body of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz and who went down to his grave. When the knot was loosened, I looked at his face and found it turned towards the *Qiblah*, so we praised and glorified Allāh."[2]

7. *His Dislike for Easing Death on Him:*

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz said: "I do not want you to try to ease the agony of death for me, as it is the last thing that can atone the sins of a believer."[3] Another narration reports that he said: "I do not want you to try to ease the agony of death for me, as it is

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-Sīrat 'Umar bin;Abd al-'Azīz* [A Compilation on the Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (2645 ,644/).

(3) *Ibid* (2648/).

the last opportunity a believer has for gaining reward."[1]

8. His State When On the Brink of Death:

When death approached 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, he said: "Go out and leave me completely alone." The people went out whilst Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik and Fātimah, 'Umar's wife and Maslamah's sister, sat in the doorway, upon which they heard 'Umar say: "Welcome to these faces that are neither the faces of people nor *Jinn* (Jinn; a species created like human but from smokeless fire as opposed to clay)."[2] Another narration states that Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik said: "While 'Umar was suffering from his fatal illness, I used to hear him say: 'O Allāh! Relieve my death from them even for just one hour of the day'. On the day that he died, I had left his room and sat outside the door and I heard him say: "*That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief (by committing crimes). And the good end is for the 'Muttaqūn' ('Pious').*" (*al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28:83) He then went quiet and I could not hear his voice, so I said to the attendant who was working for him: "Go inside and see what has happened to the Caliph." He therefore went in and began to shout at what he saw, so I entered to find that the Caliph had died with his face turned towards the *Qiblah*. He also had covered his eyes with one of his hands and covered his mouth with the other at the time of his death (may Allāh have

(1) iIbid.
(2) *Ibid* (2652/).

mercy on him)."[1]

One narration relates that when 'Umar was suffering from the illness that killed him, he said to the people around him: "Sit me down on my bed", which they did. He then said: "I am the one You ordered who did not deliver and I am the one You forbade who disobeyed, while there is no one worth of worship but Allāh." At that point he raised his head and stared sharply at something to the point that the people remarked: "You are staring sharply!" He then said: "I see a presence that is neither human nor *Jinn*", and upon uttering those words, his soul departed from his body.[2] On his ring were engraved the words: "'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz believes in Allāh."

9. The Date of His Death:

The ascetic caliph, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz, died on a Friday, ten days before the end of the month of Rajab in the year 101 AH, according to the most authentic narration. He persevered through his illness for twenty days and eventually died in the monastery of Saint Simeon located in the land of Ḥimṣ, Syria. His caliphate lasted for two years, five months and four days. 'According to the most accurate account, Umar died at the age of thirty-nine years and five months. Some accounts assert that he had just turned forty when he died.[3]

(1) *Ibid* (2653/).
(2) *Ibid* (2654/).
(3) *Tārīkh al-Qaḍā'ī* [Qaḍā'ī's History], p. 363.

10. The Money that 'Umar Left Behind:

Accounts differ over the exact amount of money 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz left behind, although they all agree that the amount was small and trivial.(1) One of these narrations is reported by 'Umar bin Ḥafṣ al-Mu'īṭī who said: "We spoke to 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's son, to whom I said: 'How much money did he leave you (all)?' At this, he smiled and said: 'A slave of ours who has been in charge of his expenses said to me: 'When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz was on the brink of death, he said to me: 'How much money do you have?' I answered: 'Fourteen *Dīnār*'. He said: 'Take it from this place to that''. I then asked 'Abd al-'Azīz: 'What did he bequeath you in gifts?' He replied: 'Six-hundred *Dīnār* and he gave the option of doing what we wanted with 'Abd al-Mālik's share. In total, we were twelve men and six women, so we divided it between fifteen."(2) In that case, they were eleven males, not including 'Abd al-Mālik who died before him.(3)

Ibn al-Jawzī says: "I was informed that al-Manṣūr said to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin al-Qāsim bin Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr as-Siddīq (may Allāh be pleased with him): 'Admonish me', so he said: "Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz died leaving behind eleven sons. The total sum of money that he left after his

(1) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (150/); *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* [The Memorial of the Hadith Masters] (1118/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 337.

(3) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (155/).

death was seven hundred *Dīnār,* which covered the cost of his shroud, which was five *Dīnār* and the plot of land for his grave which was two *Dīnār,* after which the remainder was split between his sons, meaning that they each received a share of nineteen *dirham.* On the other hand, Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik died also leaving behind eleven sons and to each of them he bequeathed a million *Dīnār.* Nevertheless, it was but a few years on that I saw one of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's sons donate one hundred horses for the sake of Allāh in one day, whilst people were said to have witnessed one of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Mālik's sons receive charity."[1] The above narrations clearly show us that even though 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz received a large inheritance from his father, it diminished to nothing by the time of his death (may Allāh have mercy in him and be pleased with him).[2]

(1) *Sīrat 'Umarbin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 338; *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (124/).

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (156/).

The People's Commemoration of Him after His Death:

Maslamah bin 'Abd al-Mālik's Eulogy:

When 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz died, Maslamah looked at him while he was lying in his burial shroud and said: "May Allāh have mercy on you! You have softened our hard hearts and kept us mindful of being righteous."(1)

Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Mālik's Eulogy:

Wabīb bin al-Warad is reported to have said: "We were told that when 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz died, some jurists went to his wife to pay their condolences to her, saying: "We have come to offer condolences to you over 'Umar. Your affliction is one shared by the *Ummah,* so could you tell us something about him (may Allāh have mercy on him)? What was he like when he was at home, as a man's family know him best?" She replied: "By Allāh, he did not pray or fast more than anyone else but, by Allāh, I never saw anyone more fearful of Allāh than 'Umar. Sometimes he used to lie in my bed where one should enjoy his pleasure with his wife but instead he

(1) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 329.

would invoke Allāh, shivering like a bird shaking off water out of utter fear. He would be very tense and start crying, and so I would say: 'By Allāh, his soul nearly came out of him!' Then I would take the quilt off me and off him and say: 'I wish we never had this caliphate offered to us and burdened with its responsibility, for by Allāh, we have never seen happiness or been at rest since then'."[1]

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Eulogy:

When news of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's death reached Al-Ḥasan, he exclaimed: "To Allāh we belong and to Him we shall return, O possessor of every good!"[2]

Makḥūl's Eulogy:

"I never saw anyone more spiritually ascetic or fearful of Allāh than 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz."

Yazīd bin Ḥawshab's Eulogy:

"I never saw anyone more fearful of Allāh than Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz. [3] It was if the Hellfire

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(1) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] extracted from *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 56.

(2) *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (153/).

(3) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā* [The History of the Caliphs] by as-Suyūṭī, extracted from *Malāmiḥ al-Inqilāb al-Islāmī fī Khilāfat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Characteristics

had solely been created for them two."[1]

The Monk Who Cried Over Him:

Al-Awzā'ī is reported to have said: "I witnessed the funeral of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz then set out on my journey to the city of Qinnasrīn (Syria) during which I passed by a monk who said: 'O man! I believe you witnessed the death of that man?' 'Yes', I replied and so the monk lowered his eyes and began to cry intensely. Surprised by this, I asked him: 'Why do you cry when you are not a follower of his religion?' He replied: 'I am not crying for him but I am crying over a light which was lit on the earth but now has been extinguished'."[2]

The King of Byzantium and His Bewilderment:

'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz has sent an envoy to the King of Byzantium regarding a matter of interest to the Muslims. When they entered upon him, a translator translated for him while he sat on his throne with his crown on his head, an aristocrat on either side of him and an audience of people in rank seating in front of him. The envoy presented what they wanted to say to him and in return he received them kindly

of the Islāmic Transformation during the Caliphate of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Dr 'Imād ad-Dīn Khalīl, p. 55.

(1) *Ṣifat aṣ-Ṣafwah* [The Description of the Elite] (1156/).

(2) *Sīrat 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Life of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] by Ibn al-Jawzi, p. 331.

and answered them fittingly. After that, they left and at the time of dinner the next day, the King's messenger called them and they entered upon the King who has descended from his throne and removed the crown from his head such that he looked completely different to the first time they had seen him as if some calamity has afflicted him. He then said: 'Do you know why I summoned you?' They replied in the negative, so he said: 'It has just reached me that the righteous King of the Arabs has died', at which point the envoy could not contain their grief and began to cry. The King asked them: 'For what reason do you cry, over him or over your religion?' They replied: 'We cry for ourselves, our religion and him'. He said: 'Do not cry for him, only cry for what has come upon you. He has certainly gone to a better place than the place he left behind. He had feared falling out of obedience to Allāh and so Allāh will not let the fear of the world agree with his fear. I had heard about his righteousness, virtue and honesty was so great that if it were possible for anyone after 'Īsā (Jesus) to bring the dead back to life, I would have thought that he could do it. I have received information about his inward and outward character and I do not find that he had other than one affair with his Lord. In fact, his inner self was stronger when he secluded himself in total obedience to his Master. I am not surprised by the monk who abandons the world and opts for a life of hermitage, however, I am surprised by the one who had the world at his feet, yet he rejected it all and became an ascetic. Indeed, good people cannot remain with bad people

except for a short while."(1)

Jarīr's Elegy for 'Umar:

"Eulogists are mourning the death of our *Amīr al-Mu'minīn,*

O, the best one who came for *Ḥajj* and *'Umrah* to the House of Allāh!

You have shouldered a great affair in which showed true adeptness,

You walked with it and spread it by the rule of Allāh, O 'Umar!

The sun is shining and will never fade away from you,

And upon you the night stars and the moon are crying."(2)

Muḥārib bin Dathār's Elegy for 'Umar:

"If death had an esteemed nature towards the one who faced it,

Then by its justice, death would not harm you, O 'Umar!

While you were on the brink of death, others waited patiently,

O my sorrow and the sorrow of those present

Over the just person that the ditch engulfs!

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(1) *Marūj adh-Dhahab* [Meadows of Gold] (3195/); *Fiqh 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz* [The Jurisprudence of 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz] (154/).

(2) *Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (12719/).

You followed them and never ceased to be diligent,

In watering the impoverished with *Sunan* of truth.

If I had power and fates were victorious,

Souls would come and go afresh."[1]

(1) *Ibid* (12719/).

References:

Glossary:

Ahl adh-Dhimmah:	Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule
Ahl al-Ḥall wal-'Aqd:	"The people of decision and power", i.e. those scholars or political and military leaders who have power and are influential in the decision-making process
Al-Jabar:	Fatalism
Al-Jannah:	Paradise
Al-Jarḥ wa at-Ta'dīl:	The science of criticizing and praising
Amīr:	Leader
An-Nār:	Hellfire
Anṣār:	"Helpers"
Ar-Rijs:	Evil deeds and sin
'Aṣr:	Afternoon Prayer
Awliyā':	Friends of Allāh; Saints
Banī	Tribe
Bayt al-Mal:	Public Treasury
Bid'ah:	Innovation in the Religion

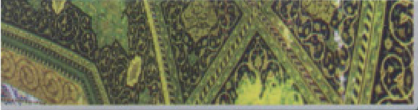
Da'wah:	Islāmic preaching
Dhirā':	Cubits; units of measure
Dīn:	The Religion of Islām
Dīnār:	Gold coins; units of account
Diyyah:	Blood-money; ransom
Du'ā':	Supplication
Fajr:	Dawn Prayer
Faqīh:	Jurist (pl. *Fuqahā'*)
Farā'iḍ:	Duties
Fay':	Conquered land or property
Fiqh:	Jurisprudence
Ghayb	"The Unseen"; all that is hidden
Ḥadīth:	Prophetic saying (pl. *Aḥadīth*)
Ḥafiẓ:	One who has committed the entire Qur'ān to memory
Hijrah:	Islāmic migration
Ḥudūd:	Fixed penalties
'Iddah:	Period of waiting a woman must observe following the death of her spouse or divorce
Imām:	Muslim Leader
Jāhiliyyah	"Ignorance"; Pre-Islāmic times
Jihād:	Fighting for Allāh's Cause

Jinn:	Jinn; a species created like humans, but from smokeless fire as opposed to clay
Jizyah:	Tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule
Jumu'ah:	Friday; congregational prayer
Kabīrah:	Major sin in Islām
Kharāj:	Board of Revenue (for collecting taxes and disbursing revenues)
Kharijites:	Sect of "Dissenters"
Khums:	Fifth of the war booty
Maghāzī:	Warriors; raiders
Makas:	Trading taxes formerly levied during the days of *Jāhiliyyah*
Manāzil:	Certain verses of the *Qur'ān* recited for protection from evil
Masjid:	Mosque
Mawlā:	Client; patron; master; lord; slave
Mawsim:	Season, i.e. *Hajj* Pilgrimage season
Minbar:	Pulpit
Misk:	Musk

Mufti:	The title given to the official issuer of legal rulings
Muhājirūn:	"Emigrants"
Mujahidin:	Warriors fighting in the way of Allāh
Mujtahid:	One who issues independent legal opinions
Murābiṭīn:	i.e. the people of *Ribāṭ,* meaning "fortified outpost"; holdig fast to outposts of the Islāmic lands in order to protect the Muslims therein
Mustaḥḥab:	Desirable; recommended
Muthlah:	Deformation
Navruz:	Christian Coptic New Year
Qadar:	Decree; Fate
Qasīdah:	A form of lyric poetry
Qiblah:	Direction of the *Ka'bah* in Makkah
Qiṣāṣ:	Legal punishment of equality
Qur'ān:	The final Book of Allāh revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Ribāṭ:	"Fortified outpost"; holdig fast to outposts of the Islāmic lands in order to protect the Muslims therein
Roṭl:	A weight equal to approx. 3.202 kg in Syria; 2.566 kg in Aleppo and Beirut.
Sadaqah:	Alms; Charity
Ṣaḥābah:	Companions of the Prophet, (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
Sāḥir:	Magician; practiser of magic
Salaf :	Pious Forebears
Ṣalāt:	Prescribed Prayers
Shaykh:	Religious elder (pl. *Shuyūkh*)
Sharā'i:	Laws
Shirk:	Polytheism; associating partners in worship with Allah
Shūra:	Consultation
Sunnah:	The Prophetic Example, Tradition (pl. *Sunan*)
Sūrah:	Chapter of the Qur'ān
Tajwīd:	The rules of Qur'ān recitation
Tawbah :	Repentance
Ta'zīr	Corporal punishment (pl. *Ta'zīrāt*)

Thawb:	Long dress-like garment worn by men
'Ulamā:	Scholars
Ushūr:	Import and Export Duty
Uṣūl ad-Dīn:	The fundamentals of Religion
Ẓālimūn:	Transgressors; Polytheists
Zinā':	Adultery; Fornication
Ẓuhr:	Midday Prayer



صفحات من سيرة عمر بن عبدالعزيز

This book describes, among other things, the principles based upon which 'Umar ibn Abd Al-'Aziz governed the Muslims during his caliphate; among those principles were mutual consultation, justice, equality among people, and honoring of freedoms.

With the turn of every page, the reader will come to appreciate the fact that 'Umar was exceptional in his Faith, distinguished in his knowledge, profoundly wise in his thinking, remarkable in his eloquence, noble in his manners and great in the contribution he made to this Nation.

English readers have long been deprived of the life story of this outstanding Islāmic hero and exemplar. While there are some short and scattered accounts about his general life, this is the first book to deal specifically with 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz's reforms, which is surprising given that he has been attributed the title of Mujaddid (Reformer; Reviver) within Islāmic scholarship, in great detail.

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